

CELTICS



PRIDE

Vol. 7 • Issue 17

September 14, 1992

\$3.00

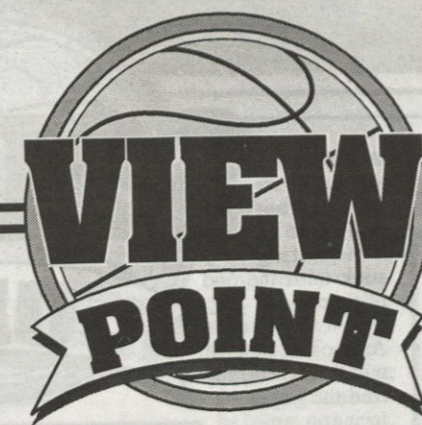
CP973994
FRANK STRACUSA
1824 N. 78TH AVENUE
ELMWOOD PARK IL 60635
08/10

The End of an Era



The success of any team can be attributed to the strength of their bench.

CELTICS PRIDE



WHAT MORE CAN YOU SAY ABOUT LARRY?

By Porter McKinnon

Even though I know it was best for him to retire, it still really hurts to see it actually happen. I knew it had to happen, but it was still a shock to me. Larry was the heart and soul of the Celtics for thirteen years. I am sure that none of us can even imagine anywhere near all the positive effects Larry had on the Celtics organization, the NBA, other individual Celtic players and the game of basketball in general.

Would the present owners of the Celtics even have been interested in purchasing the team if Larry had not been its principle asset? Would the value of this franchise be even half of what it is today without him? I don't know the answers to these two questions, but my guess is — no.

Would the NBA have been able to achieve anywhere near the success that it has without Larry Bird? Oh, I know that David Stern is a marketing genius and he gets (and deserves) a lot of the credit for the incredible turnaround and success of the NBA. I know how hard David Stern works. I know the hours he puts in. I know what he demands out of his employees, because I worked for NBA Properties during those years when David Stern turned the NBA around. I am convinced that David Stern could make a success out of any business in this country. It is the degree of success that I

question. You can be a marketing genius, but you have to have a reasonably good product to make it. A friend of mine's favorite saying is "You can't make chicken salad out of chicken — (poop)! What I am asking is, "Could David Stern have brought the NBA to the level that it presently is at if Larry Bird did not come into the NBA at about the same time that Stern took over the controls?" I do know the answer to this one. The answer is definitely NO! Everyone connected to the NBA owes Larry a huge debt of gratitude.

How many careers of players with mediocre talent were extended and enhanced because they were blessed to have Larry Bird playing

with them? He just flat out made *everyone* he played with better. I can't think of any other player in any sport that had an effect on his teammates even close to that of Larry Bird. I am sure that just about every player who ever played with him would admit this.

How about his effect on the game of basketball in general? You can answer that. You saw the Olympics. You saw the preliminary games in Portland (not exactly a bastion of Celtics fans) where the fans chanted for Larry to be put into the games even though he was injured. Then came the ovations when he did enter the game and also when he scored. Similar ovations were heard in Barcelona. The Dream Team wouldn't have been much of a dream without him.

Larry Bird is the embodiment of "Celtics Pride." What is "Celtics Pride?" It is LARRY JOE BIRD! No — not him the person. "Celtics Pride" is his work ethic, his commitment, his intensity, his refusal to quit.

Will Celtics basketball be the same without him? Speaking only for myself, I have to say no. I'll always be a Celtics fan. I'll always love to go to the games and watch the Celtics on TV. But it honestly will be different for me. If a Michael Jordan type was traded to the Celtics tomorrow, he still couldn't replace Larry Bird — at least not for me.

Thanks for the memories, Larry. Thanks for defining "Celtics Pride." Good luck and God bless you. •

LINEUP

FEATURES

THE BIRD ERA

Why was Larry Bird's retirement such a milestone in NBA history? Take a look back at Larry's illustrious career, a career spanning thirteen seasons in Boston, seventeen altogether in major competition, and it becomes obvious that such an accomplished athlete as Bird only comes around once in a lifetime.

Page 12

A LONG SHOT

Too bad for Darren Morningstar that fans and media don't have a say in who does and doesn't make the Celtics. If we did, the second round pick would be a lock. As it is, Morningstar must at the present time be considered a longshot to survive the final cut. The 6'11-240 pound Pitt product is only marginally athletic and talented but he has been captivating fans with his hardnosed, relentless style on the court and off.

Page 15



DEPARTMENTS

Sound Off.....	4
Coaches Corner.....	5
Color It Green.....	6
Man to Man.....	7
Halfcourt Press.....	10
Perspective.....	14
Nothing But Net.....	17
Confidential.....	22

COVER

When Larry Bird stated that he "could no longer play with his back as painful as it is," an immediate feeling of change swept over his farewell press conference. Bird's finished with playing now, and we all have our own images of his powerful, brilliant form of basketball. It is certainly the end of an era for the Boston Celtics.

Page 8

Cover photography by Steve Lipofsky

Volume 7, Issue 17, Number 137, September 14, 1992

CELTICS PRIDE

A WESTON COMMUNICATIONS PUBLICATION

PUBLISHER/MANAGING EDITOR

Porter C. McKinnon
Weston Communications Inc.
85 Old Long Ridge Road
Stamford CT 06903
203-329-2000

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Sherry Davis

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

Michael Fuchs

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

P.J. Uva

PHOTOGRAPHY

Steve Lipofsky Dave Boag

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Red Auerbach Kevin Doyle Mike Spellman
Chris Ford P.J. Uva
Jim Bianchine Bob Schron

NATIONAL ADVERTISING & MARKETING OFFICE

Ami Brophy
Advertising Director
11400 West Olympic Blvd., 2nd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90064
Tel: (310) 914-0140 Fax: (310) 445-8800

REGIONAL ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Mark Lev
617-523-6050

PRODUCTION

Romax Communications
46 Hedge Brook Lane, Stamford, CT 06903
203-324-4260

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Maria Hill
203-329-2000

Celtics Pride (ISSN 0897-8379) is published twice per month during the basketball season (October-May) and monthly in the off-season (June-September), for a total of 20 issues each year, by Weston Communications, Inc., 85 Old Long Ridge Road, Stamford CT 06903. Second Class postage is paid at Stamford CT and additional entry offices. Subscription rate is \$36.00 for 20 issues (1 year). Canadian subscriptions are US\$66.00 for 20 issues.

Postmaster, please send address changes to: Celtics Pride, 85 Old Long Ridge Road, Stamford CT 06903. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission is prohibited. ©1992 WESTON COMMUNICATIONS INC.

By Porter McKinnon

Dear Sound Off:

I was driving in my car earlier today (August 18) when the news came on the radio — Larry Bird decided to retire from basketball. This news was not that surprising to me, but as any loyal fan would be, I was hoping that there would be a slim chance he'd play for one more year. Unfortunately, I was wrong!!

To me, Larry Bird is and was the greatest basketball player to ever play the game. He either made that game-winning shot or made that one pass that would win a close game like game 5 of the 1987 playoffs against Detroit. He did it all — whatever it took to win, he would always find a way to do it!!

He made these last 7 years of my life the most memorable.

And thank you *Celtics Pride* for giving me the opportunity to share this.

Jackie Huber
Schenectady, NY

Not only did he go out a winner, he showed all of us what hard work can accomplish.

Knowing how much Larry wanted to play, I have got to imagine the pain from his assorted injuries over the last three seasons had to be incredible to keep him from not playing. Most modern-day athletes seem to use any excuse they can find to sit out.

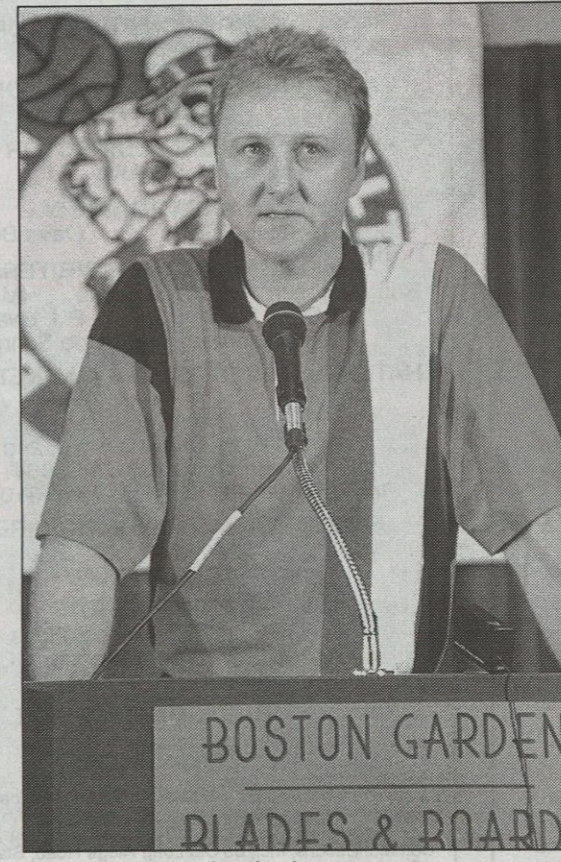
Not Larry! What an inspiration.

THE STUFF OF A LEGEND

A boy, a ball, a hoop, and a dream

An expert in fundamentals molded through years of practice

A player who stood alone, yet helped his college teammates through an improbable season



Larry was a true inspiration.

SOUND OFF

LARRY WILL ALWAYS BE LOVED

A championship showdown that will serve as a measuring stick until the end of time

A rookie season which revolutionized the game

Growing dedication each successive season to elevate basketball to new levels

Playing five hours a day in the off-season

Shooting two hours before every game to maintain precision

Game-winning shots at the buzzer

A loose ball never too far out of reach

Relentless determination to grab key rebounds

A pinpoint pass evading a jungle of waving arms before arriving on target

The pick-and-roll run to perfection a thousand times over

A half court shot that earned the team a day off from practice

Bold predictions backed by heroic clutch performances

The 1986 season — an exhibition of marvelous court savvy which highlighted perhaps the greatest team ever

Duels with Julius, Magic, Isiah, Michael and Dominique

Three consecutive MVP seasons

A three-point contest wherein to display the most skillful shooting ever

Three banners that hang higher than the rest

An epic steal that confirmed legendary status

The series against the Pacers which provided the ultimate example of courage

One final game on the parquet to defy all critics

A gold medal, a true world champion, and a career that will never, ever be forgotten

THANK YOU #33

B. Dale
N.E., MD

Dear Sound Off:

I can hardly believe it. The best white man to ever play professional bas-

ketball has retired. I was so shocked when I heard the news that Larry Bird retired, that I called *Celtics Pride* to make sure. Larry made the right decision, but I hate to see him leave the game for good. I will never forget the outstanding shots that Larry made to win games in the final seconds of play, and, of course, all of the championship banners that he helped the Celtics get. From trading baskets with Magic Johnson to talking trash with Chuck Person. Thanks for all those wonderful memories, Larry.

Is there any way that I could get a video tape of Larry's 49 point game vs. Portland or game 5 vs. the Pacers from 1991?

And are there still back issues from 1988 with Larry, Kevin, Robert, DJ and Danny Ainge on the cover?

Phil Needler
Albany, IN

What do you mean "best white man?" I know Michael Jordan is a scoring machine, but in my mind Larry is still number one.

As far as I know, it is not legal to sell tapes of a single game. Perhaps NBC or NBA Properties could help you.

Sorry, we are out of those back issues.

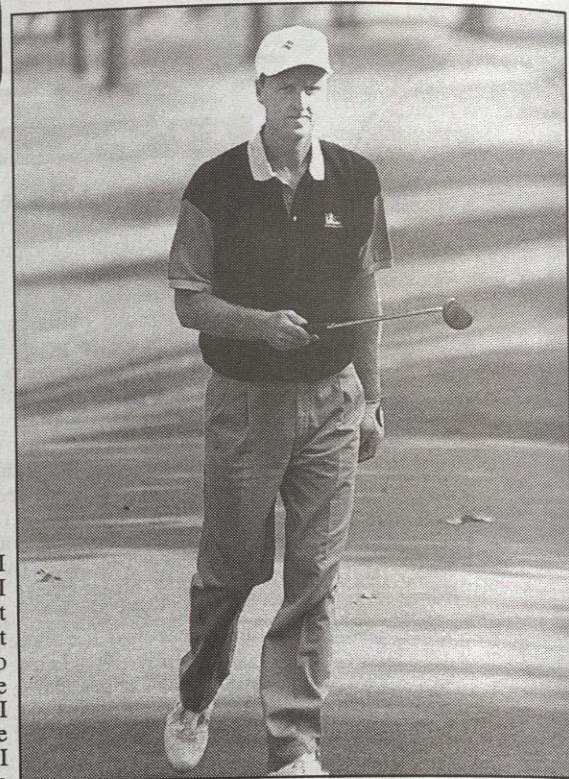
Dear Sound Off:

Being such a big Celtic fan, and a certified Larry Bird fanatic, I'd like to share a bit of my summer vacation with you.

In June my husband of 25 years finally took me to West Baden and French Lick, Indiana, to see where Larry Bird grew up. (This was after years of begging and pleading!) I didn't even expect to "see" Larry, just where he lives and breathes, but to my great pleasure, he was THERE!!! While he weed-whipped around the brushes by his pool, I stood by his white fence taking picture after picture (from where I was at, he would be about the size of an ant in the pictures), and yelling, "Mr. Bird!!"

I even accosted this poor wife at the post office in West Baden and asked if I could possibly meet Larry and get a picture. She very politely turned me down and I meekly "turned-tail," got back in my car and went back to Oklahoma.

To make a long story short, the



Larry can be accessible on the golf course.

pictures I took of Larry were destroyed during processing. To say the least, I was very disappointed and I'll never get that close again, but I'll always have my memories.

Thanks for the great publication, I thoroughly enjoy it!

J.A. Gabel
Seiling, OK

Maybe you should attend Larry's golf tournament as a spectator next August, and bring your camera. I understand he is very accessible for pictures at that time.

Dear Sound Off:

After his 3-pointer iced the game, he looked into the crowd at court-side and blew someone (probably a heckler) a kiss. That was my last live memory of "Larry Legend" at the Sports Arena when the Celtics beat the Clippers last December.

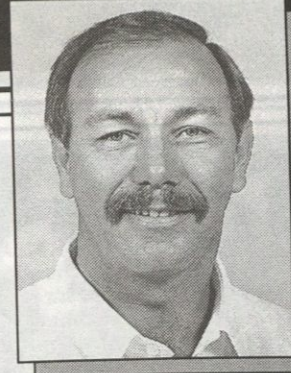
In retrospect, Larry Bird's last game in Los Angeles (he was out hurt for the Laker game) was a farewell of sorts. Right after that, Larry was out for two full months with a bad back. It probably didn't feel too good when he played in that final Clipper game. But being the competitor that he'll always be remembered as, Bird COMPETED and WON!

As a Celtics fan since 1969, it was with a mixture of relief and sadness that I opened my local paper and read that Larry Bird had retired. His announcement brought to mind so many memories that I couldn't possibly go into in depth here: the "coast to coast" bank shot that beat Philly in 1981, the sauna bath game against the Lakers in 1984, the Erving confrontation, the game five steal against the Pistons for DJ's layup, and so on.

Larry, thank you for a wonderful career and the courage to quit when it was time. Cousy, Russell, Havlicek, Cowens, and now Bird. If it makes you happy, I hope you'll stay with the Celtics forever.

Mike Stephano
Redlands, CA

Amen! •



By Chris Ford

Larry Bird's retirement on August 18 was something that has affected us all here in numerous ways. I was still playing when Larry came into the league before the 1979-80 season, and immediately, everyone in the Celtics organization knew he was someone special. I could never remember seeing a rookie with as much passing skill and as much self-confidence. Our team manufactured a tremendous turnaround in Larry's rookie season. We went from a 29-53 record the year before all the way to the Eastern Conference championship and the best record in the league, 61-21, at the conclusion of Bird's first season.

Larry won the Rookie of the Year award that season, over Magic Johnson. And that year, more than his fantastic talent, he displayed what would make him perhaps the best ever to play the game (maybe he is, maybe he isn't, but he'll be in the arguments about who is). What made Larry Bird such a special player was his will to win and his love and passion for the game. It's unusual for a rookie to come in and motivate veterans to play to their ultimate, but that's what Larry did in his first year, as Dave Cowens, Tiny Archibald and Cedric Maxwell all had great years after struggling the previous seasons. It took two seasons of hard work before we won our first title in the 1980's, and

it was because Larry's talent and work ethic were out front in our drive. I'm obviously not revealing any great secrets here: his absence leaves a tremendous void for the Celtics.

One of Larry's special attributes, that work ethic, is something I'll return to momentarily, because it involves his efforts during every summer of his thirteen year career. Every October he would come back with either a new skill or an improved or refined one. In 1983 and 1984 his rebounding received special attention; in 1985, his left-handed shooting became a weapon — he would move to the hoop for sweeping left-handed hooks, or short jumpers. More than that, his one-on-one moves from the left wing powered our offense in three different ways. In isolation he was unstoppable, a 6'9" small forward backing in small foes for drives or fouls. This, in turn, set up a devastating pick-and-roll with either Robert Parish or Bill Walton. Finally, when defenses compensated for those two moves, we would have Danny Ainge, and then Reggie Lewis, free for 3-pointers or penetrating drives.

Larry's playoff steals, first against Andrew Toney in 1985 to clinch the Eastern Conference finals against Philadelphia and then in 1987, against Detroit in game five to save that series, will always be remembered. His concert with Dennis Johnson, another great defender, is legend. He was an ex-

COACH'S CORNER

BIRD'S DEPARTURE

cellent team defensive player. When Bill Fitch realized this in the early eighties, we were able to use Maxwell as a "stopper" defensively, this leading to a great team helping concept, which marked our resourceful defensive play throughout the last decade, when we won three championships.

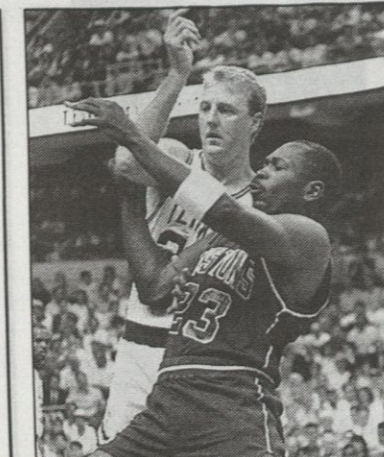
Above, I referred to Larry's steal against Isiah Thomas in the 1987 Eastern Conference finals against Detroit. That play and hundreds of others were examples of a player who played his absolute best in pressure situations. From those moments during his peak seasons, back to as early as his first games as a rookie, Larry Bird was a go-to player. As I said, he leaves a tremendous void, and we have a heavy load to carry now.

All that said, I'm happy in a sense for Larry, because now he'll have more time to spend with his family, and he'll be able to move on to the next part of his life, however difficult that now seems for him at this present point in time (I know — it was an intense struggle for me, emotionally, when I retired from the game in 1983). It was tough for Larry the past few seasons because, at the conclusion of a glorious career, he had to endure pain and injuries. People knew what he was going through, yet, always, he gave it his best effort to try and come back and play. And I always trusted him. When he said he could give it a try, I never hesitated to use him.

It's fitting, in a sense, that if Larry's retirement had to come, it did come at the end of a season when our guys were able to elevate their games and play well in his absence. We were all aware of the attention Larry attracted from the media and fans and it's yet another tribute to Larry's class that he made the remark that he was happy for the team at the end of the year — we won 21 of 22 down the stretch of the 1991-92 season and Bird made the statement that he was proud of the team because it was criticized so heavily, usually in his absence, for depending so much on him.

So we are somewhat prepared in some different ways to play next season without Larry, and it's a positive thing that we have the success of our play late last season as something to build on. We have some great resources, but the league has changed, and it is tough.

There are several changes, even at this early point in time, to consider. Shaquille O'Neal's addition to Orlando and the youth in Charlotte, spearheaded by Larry Johnson, Alonzo Mourning and Kendall Gill, have already started changing the balance in the East. New York, with Rolando Blackman and Hubert Davis as solid additions, will probably be the team to beat in the Atlantic. New Jersey, I believe, will be improved a great deal with Chuck Daly coaching. Philadelphia and Milwaukee are other teams that have made important changes during the off-season, and it's hard to know how Charles Barkley's loss will affect the 76ers. In the West, Phoenix (with Barkley, Ainge and possibly Oliver Miller and Richard Dumas), San Antonio (Jerry Tarkanian), Portland (Rod Strickland)



Larry's talents, plus his charisma, are qualities the Celtics will never be able to replace.

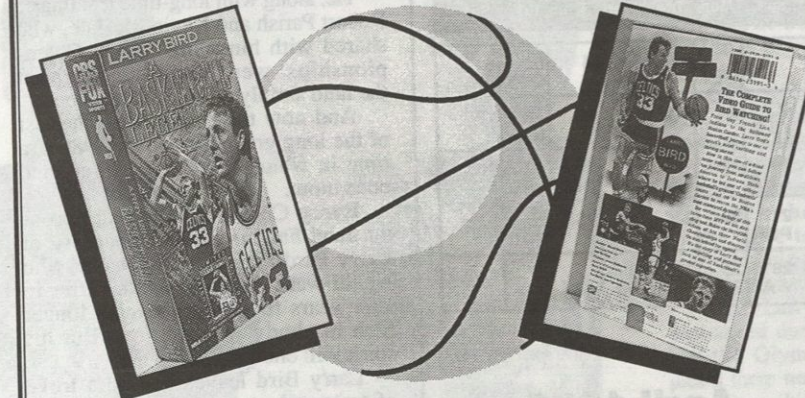
and Utah (Jay Humphreys and an improved David Benoit, who played very well in the LA Summer League) will all be right there in challenging for Chicago's NBA title. Who will be able to tell how much the benefits of Chris Mullin's Gold and Sarunas Marciulionis' Bronze medals will lift the Warriors? And if Magic Johnson does come back, how much will his presence mean to the race as a whole if the Lakers have an inspired year?

In the East we all will be aiming toward knocking off the Bulls (who drafted Byron Houston) and the Cleveland Cavaliers, who had a great season in 1991-92. We regard ourselves as one of eight teams who can; in a league that has become bigger, quicker, more athletic and even more team-oriented, we believe we have enough talented athletes and veteran know-how that could take us to the title, if things break right. There will be increased expectations, from players such as Reggie Lewis, Dee Brown, Eddie Pinckney, Joe Kleine, Rick Fox and Kevin Gamble, augmenting the veterans, Robert Parish and Kevin McHale. We did finish last season on a powerful note; hopefully, we'll be able to avenge our disappointing 7th game defeat in the playoffs in Cleveland, and go even further if we're in a similar game in next season's playoffs. We haven't entirely ruled moves out. We do want Jon Barry in camp in the fall, ready to make a contribution, confirming why we drafted him in June.

The day Larry retired was a very emotional day. Larry joked with me, reminding me and all I had never won a title in my playing career until he came along. I laughed with the rest of the press conference that morning. Larry Bird's talents and charisma, and humor, intangibles and skills are qualities the Celtics will never be able to replace.

But we must carry on. We had a good summer of work in Rookie Camp and in the New York Summer League. We have scouted European ball extensively and we have a strong, positive feeling about the team now in a league that is extremely competitive, every night out. I think one of the best things that did come out of Larry's decision to end his playing career was that he would continue to have a voice in decision-making in an as yet unannounced position in the team's front office. Hopefully we'll be able to deliver on his stated goal for the team — to bring another title back to the fans of Boston. •

THE COMPLETE VIDEO GUIDE TO BIRD WATCHING



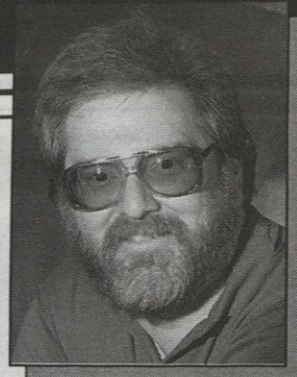
From tiny French Lick, Indiana to the hallowed Boston Garden, Larry Bird's basketball journey is one of sport's most exciting and moving stories.

Exclusive footage of this three-time MVP at his dazzling best. Relive the incredible action of his three World Championships and discover the man behind the legend. Approx. 40 min.

Each video will include an exclusive Larry Bird NBA HOOPS card.

A must for your Celtics fan and a great gift-giving idea. Order now!!!

Use coupon on page 21 to place your order. # 60\$24.95



By Jim Bianchine

The rain over Boston may have been the city's way of weeping over losing one of its favorite sons. Despite Larry Bird being a home-spun Hoosier from Indiana, he became as much a part of the Hub's lore as the Constitution, Bunker Hill and the Old North Church.

When it came to sports, his name was synonymous with the city. Bird's announcement on August 18 was like another shot heard around the world some years ago on a green in Lexington.

The adopted Patriot announced that he was retiring from the game of basketball after 13 stellar seasons with the Boston Celtics, thus making Tuesday, August 18, 1992, "Black Tuesday" to adoring men, women and children all over New England, some died-in-the-wool fans and others nothing more than natives.

It marked the end of an era, though a mid-August press conference hardly seems a fitting end to one of the sport's all-time greats. He came into the league with trumpets blaring, but leaves without even a soft serenade.

To appreciate Larry Bird, one did not have to be a fan bathed in green.

Bird's impact on basketball is immeasurable. His impact on all of New England may have been greater than his love of accomplishments on the hardwood with one of the most storied franchises in sports history.

COLOR IT GREEN

LEAVING AS A LEGEND

Buoyed by his most innate skill, pride, Bird realized better than anyone that injuries changed the way he played the game and anyone who has ever seen him play realized he only knew one way.

He was a throwback in an era of modern day athletes. His work ethic may well have limited him to the 13 years he graced the fabled parquet of the Boston Garden, a charming old lady that he and his teammates called home.

Mother Nature may have been responsible for the veil of tears over the Garden during the noon press conference, but ultimately it was Father Time who signalled the end of one of the most brilliant careers in the 101-year history of the American sport.

Anyone who was able to get close enough to the living legend knew full well that one last grand farewell tour was not what the kid from French Lick was all about.

Bird's litany of awards speaks for itself. His accomplishments, both personal and as the consummate team player, speak volumes. What he meant to his team spanned far beyond his 21,791 career points or three consecutive MVP trophies beginning in 1984.

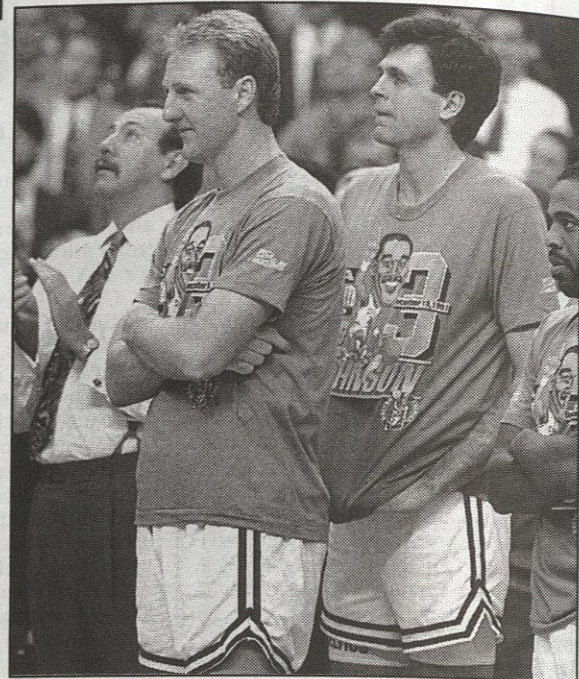
The kid with the flowing blond locks, who looked like he stepped right off the Hollywood set of Hoosiers, and with an innate basketball sense few will ever know, came to Boston for one thing. He was brought here to regain a lost respect and uphold a tradition.

There was only one way — by winning, and Bird epitomized what the organization stood for. Winning wasn't the first thing, it was the only thing and he welcomed the challenge of carrying the proud banner those of the team's legendary past strode into battle with, carrying it high and proud.

He may have had the single most devastating impact of all-time in NBA annals. He literally turned a struggling 29-53 team into a 61-21 powerhouse in his very first season as a professional.

Bird was a special player for a multitude of reasons, but none more than his exploits with the game on the line. What separates the good players from the great ones is the desire to perform in the end and Bird begged for the ball at such times and became the definition of what has become known in the NBA as the "go-to-guy."

He was the Celtics' savior so many



Larry: "I came here a hick and I'm leaving a legend. That ain't bad."

times. In fact, his icy calm during the most tedious of times and all the miraculous of finishes that fill reels of highlight films came to become expected.

Many of those lucky enough to have seen him play nearly every night since he came into the league more than a decade ago felt it more of a privilege than a job. Despite the countless times he laced his sneakers, you usually saw something new and creative every night.

Yesterday's announcement marked the inevitable. But in Boston the shock waves will be felt for a very long time and swallowing it will remain hard despite coming to expect his very words at the press conference.

Bird physically tried to endure as long as he could and maintain a level he set for himself, standards which were hard to maintain, especially following surgery to both heels and to his back just a year later. His goals were equally as lofty.

He, along with long-time teammates Robert Parish and Kevin McHale, who shared with him three World Championships, were known throughout the land simply as "The Big Three."

And now they are two — the last of the long green line of the 1980's, a time in which the Celtics flourished once more.

Every Celtics fan spread across the land has his favorite memory of Larry Bird. Yet there isn't one who would want to see the man suffer in later years for staying around longer than his body would allow. But his spirit will endure.

Larry Bird leaves behind a trove of treasured memories and there will be an emptiness felt by us all.

But his leaving now means one thing. He will be able to walk, not limp, through the pearly gates of the Basketball Hall of Fame and stand tall when he enters the shrine someday, his place already reserved.

Over the years each scribe close to the organization remembers ledgers of little things. Of the many times I shared a few moments of closeness with the man, one rises to the top.

Last season Bird smiled near the conclusion of our little chat and said, "I came here a hick and I'm leaving a legend. That ain't bad."

No Larry, that ain't bad at all. ●

By Bob Schron

Celtics Pride interviewed veteran Boston Globe columnist Bob Ryan in this issue, with respect to Ryan's long association with Larry Bird, the Celtics' superstar who announced his retirement from the game on August 18. Ryan, the co-author of Bird's autobiography, Drive, reached during the Tournament of the Americas in Portland in June, was one man who predicted Bird's decision.

"I watch Larry struggling out here," Ryan said then, "and I can't help but think that when all (of the Olympic preparation) is over, he'll call a press conference and announce he's decided to end his career."

"Larry said after he had back surgery (in June of 1991) that if he had to go through a season like the one he had in 1990-91, he'd give the game up. That's what happened last season, so I think he'll retire."

In August, Bird confirmed Ryan's prediction.

Celtics Pride: Was there any moment at all during the past year when Larry reminded you of the player all fans treasured?

Bob Ryan: There were two games, really, that said it all. The first was the double overtime win over Portland in March, when he was able to summon up all of the things that made him so special — he scored (49 points), he hit the pressure shots down the stretch, he passed, rebounded and most importantly, imposed his will on the game.

The other game was the final one he played in the Garden in the playoffs against Cleveland. There was a plethora of uncertainty about whether Larry should be playing at all at that point, since the team had done so well (21 wins in 22 games at one stretch late in the season) without him. In his final game in the Garden, Bird made a statement — 7 assists in the game's opening moments, and, most important, a real dominance of the game. I think it made it a very special night in the Garden, compliments of Larry Bird.

CP: Yet, afterward in the Tournament of the Americas and in Barcelona, you never could be really convinced that he could make it back.

BR: Larry played a complementary role in the Olympics, passing the ball and providing a leadership role. I was amazed, more at what he meant as a symbol of the game, internationally. I found myself acting as a go-between when the great Oscar Schmidt of Brazil wanted an autographed copy of Larry's autobiography. Opponents were just honored to have an opportunity to play on the same court as Larry.

On the floor, though, it was apparent how difficult it was for Larry to make his accustomed moves. He had a very good game in the opening round of the Tournament of the Americas, but after that it was a real disappointment he couldn't play again there.

CP: It was rumored during the Olympics that he was aching so much he might have to leave during the Olympics.

BR: Larry was asked during the Olympics if there was ever a possibility there could ever be another Dream Team, and he answered, "Not unless I'm on it." No. There was never the possibility he would leave the Olympics; winning a Gold Medal turned out to be an important career goal for

him. Standing on the stand with Magic Johnson was very important as well. I will say that getting there, to Barcelona, was difficult. I would have made any type of arrangement if I were David Stern and Dave Gavitt (the two Davids) to insure that Larry made it to Spain whole. I was worried. I'm glad it finally worked out.

CP: If there were any games where Larry's career to you, what were they?

BR: There were so many. I think that if you think of Larry Bird, you not only know about his fantastic ability, you know about what we called his drive. I think there were two instances that were special in this regard.

The first was his game five performance in the 1984 Finals against the Lakers, the "Heat Game." In it, everyone on both teams was reaching for the oxygen masks. The heat was stifling, over 100 degrees in the Garden. But Larry was brilliant, shooting 15-for-20 from the floor, scoring 34 points and pulling down 17 rebounds. Afterward there were the hoards crowding around him, asking him how he did it? And the highlight of what Larry said was, "It was nothing special." It was the Game of Games, the one he had practiced years for.

Another memorable contest was during the Eastern Conference finals against the Milwaukee Bucks in 1986. Larry was having a great series, averaging over 25, dominant, but there was a singular play that stood out. There was a loose ball in front of the Bucks' bench and, for a moment, everyone seemed to stand still, frozen. But here comes Larry, diving into the pack and he retrieves the ball and while lying flat on his back, he feeds the ball to Kevin McHale for a layup. Don Nelson, coaching the Bucks at the time, will never forget that play.

CP: How did Larry change over the years?

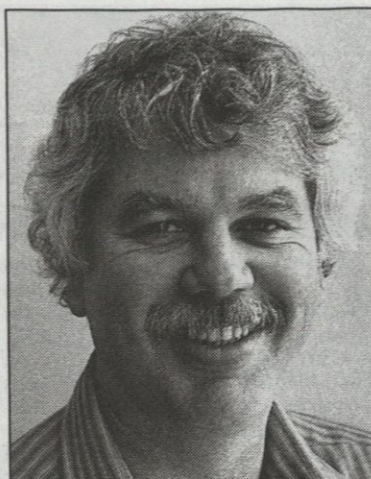
BR: I think it was striking at the press conference. When he first came to Boston in 1979, he was uninitiated, unable to deal well with the media, unwilling to, really, off of his experience with the press at Indiana State. But here, in his final press conference, you could see how poised he is now, how well he manages his public personality. It's something athletes have to master, but not all great ones do. We have another athlete in Boston, Roger Clemens, one of the all-time great pitchers, who doesn't interact well with the press, and he's in his ninth professional season.

CP: How do you think he will adjust to retirement?

BR: I've said it to you before: When we were doing the book he said then, "People think I'll have a hard time adjusting (to life without basketball). But I'll be able to walk away from it."

One of the real pleasures I've had is getting to know Larry off the court. He's grown a considerable amount. He'll be all right.

CP: If it's possible at the present



Ryan: "One of the real pleasures I've had is getting to know Larry off the court."

moment, can you look ahead and foresee how the Celtics will perform without him next season, and in the future?

BR: Will the Celtics contend? Yes. Will the Celtics hang a banner in the old Garden next season, or even any time soon? No.

The Celtics right now have a nice, balanced team and I think it was important that last season they proved they could win without Larry. Reggie Lewis is certainly becoming a big-time player and the veterans, Robert Parish and Kevin McHale, showed they are capable (though by no means certain) of playing a significant role for the team. But I think in order for the team to play to its potential next season, there are two key players who have to perform. It wasn't an accident that Dee Brown and Rick Fox were the two men who attended Larry's farewell (press conference). They're the key players. Dee has to get back to his 1991 pre-season form, when Larry predicted he would be an All-Star. And the Celtics have to turn Rick Fox loose. He seems to have the potential to be something of an impact player in this league.

CP: What's left to suitably honor Bird?

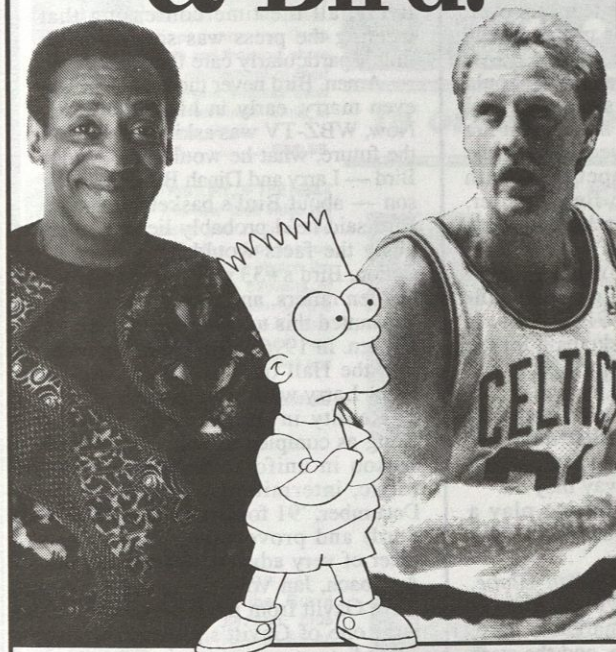
BR: I think it's significant and a very important touch that Dave Gavitt and Red have both brought Larry into the front office and that they will retire his number on a special night in a ceremony that won't take place during or before a game. It will be a special night for a player whose impact was that approaching Bill Russell's. Russell created the Celtic Dynasty, and Larry resuscitated it.

CP: Are you satisfied that Larry will pick up and continue his basketball career in a different capacity?

BR: I am surprised, but I'm glad he'll continue in basketball with the Celtics, and in Boston. Again, though, it goes back to how much he's grown. Larry always said he would retire and go home to French Lick when he was through with basketball. But he's like John Havlicek, who said he would go back to Ohio, and couldn't, in the end, pull himself out of Boston. I couldn't see him in another capacity, but during the last 10 days of his basketball career in Barcelona, I confess that I did begin to detect different rumblings. The message was: Take me at my word, I can't go through this (back pain any longer as a player).

Larry clearly was saying "I'm ready to do something else." ●

Bill, Bart & Bird.



FOX 25
THE BOSTON FOX WFXT-TV

TM & © 1992 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

1992-93 BOSTON CELTICS SCHEDULE

November 1992

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6 MIN	7 MIL
8	9	10 MIA	11 CHA	12	13 PHI	14 NY
15	16	17 WAS	18 UTA	19	20	21 ATL
22	23* ATL	24	25 WAS	26	27 CHA	28 PHI
29	30					

December 1992

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 CLE	2 CHI	3	4 MIA	5 CHI
6	7	8 ORL	9 DEN	10	11 SEA	12
13	14	15 MIN	16 IND	17	18 NY	19
20	21	22 NJ	23 HOU	24	25	26 UTA
27	28	29 SEA	30 LAC	31		

January 1993

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	
3 LAC	4	5 CHA	6 IND	7	8 NJ	9
10 NY	11	12 CLE	13 WAS	14	15 ORL	16 MIL
17	18 CHI	19	20 ATL	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 DET	28	29 ORL	30
31	LAL					

February 1993

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 PHI
6	7 GS	8	9* MIL	10	11	12 DAL
13	14	15	16 PHO	17	18 HOU	19
20	21	22	23 IND	24	25	26 ATL
27	28	29	30			

March 1993

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 DET	2	3 SAN	4	5 DET
6	7 CLE	8	9	10 PHI	11	12 MIL
13	14	15	16 GS	17	18 DEN	19
20	21	22	23	24 MIA	25	26 DAL
27	28	29	30	31 PHI		

April 1993

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 PHO	3
4	5	6	7	8 NY	9	10
11	12	13 IND	14	15 NJ	16	17 MIA
18	19	20	21 ORL	22	23 CLE	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Home games are shaded. * Denotes a home game in Hartford, CT. All games on WEEI (590 AM) Radio. All times are local times, and all are PM.

End of an Era

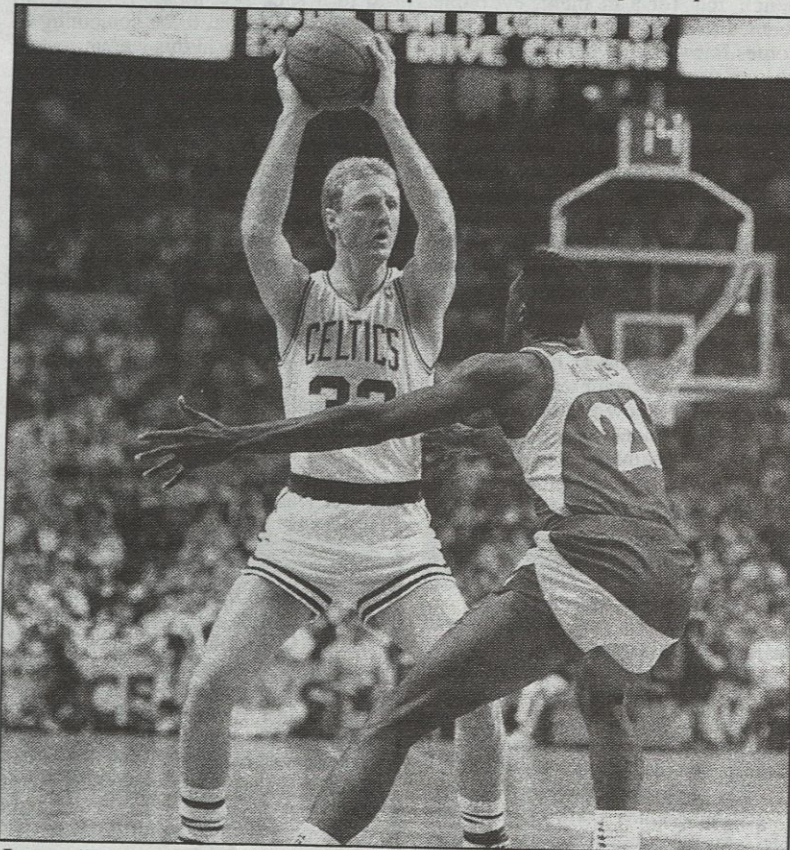
Larry's Legend Will Forever Live in Boston Garden

By Bob Schron

In these uncertain times — and what better evidence of this than Larry Bird's United States Olympic (Dream) Team easily outdistancing the Croatian Team for the Gold Medal in August. The Celtics as we have known them for the past thirteen seasons are now, as Bird commented, "different." When Bird announced his retirement on August 18, commenting that he "could no

"Larry is one of six (players) you can make a case for as the best of all time. The others are Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Bill Russell, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Oscar Robertson... Larry had the attitude of a champion."
— Red Auerbach

longer play with his back as painful as it is," an immediate feeling of change swept over his farewell press conference. Larry Bird was the fifteenth player in NBA history to score over 20,000 points. He was First Team All League ten times, three times the MVP of the league, twice playoff MVP and the driving force for the team as it won three championships in 1981, 1984 and 1986.

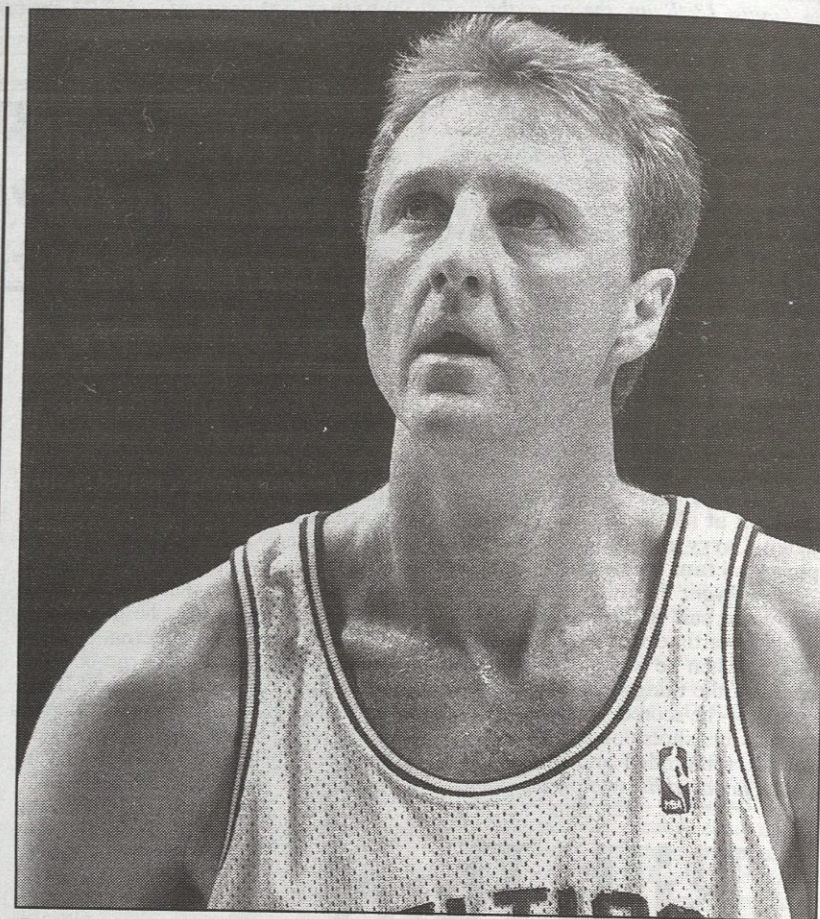


Larry: "I was very fortunate to play a game that I loved. It was such a high for seventeen years."

Celtic and basketball fans fully understand the immensity of the man, and so do Bird's former teammates and competitors. When Larry Bird was fully prepared to take over a game, even post-peak, the aura kicked in. It's the same quality of inevitability Michael Jordan evinces now, and Magic Johnson did once. People were awed that Bird could win pressure games repeatedly for Boston with pressure shots because, it was argued, if opponents knew Bird was to take the final shot of a game, why couldn't he be defended? No one had more power on a basketball floor than the Magnificent Bird. He willed the ball to him in critical situations. His last second shot in game seven of the Eastern Conference finals versus Philadelphia and the legendary Doctor J, Julius Erving, in 1981 re-established championship basketball for the Celtics. The final score was 91-90. It had been a remarkable series for Boston, down 3-1 in games, seemingly down and out in game 5 as they trailed by 110-103 with but 1:51 left, and the Doctor going for the jugular. But Bird and, critically, his teammates prevailed, winning the final three games, overcoming double digit deficits in each game to win.

Once again, there was a confidence that banners would again be hanging from the rafters in the Boston Garden. For whatever else was coming down in Celtic fans' lives, there was this delightful knowledge that The Bird would deliver titles to Boston, now and in the future. The certainty was inspiring.

"Of everything, if I have regrets," Bird said at the press conference, "It's that we didn't win more titles. I wanted to win five championships while I



Larry: "Of everything, if I have regrets, it's that we didn't win more titles."

played, but, now, it's just not possible. "Retirement is a very emotional thing for me, standing up here and announcing this. You won't see tears from me — there were tears (in private, in my home). The tears are over; now it's important for me to get on with the rest of my life.

"If there's one thing fans should know, it's that they shouldn't feel sorry for Larry Bird. I had a great life (in basketball). I played against the highest level of competition, with great teammates. We flew charter, stayed in the best hotels, and were paid very well for it. I always said, and I thank our great owners, that if the owners were paying me \$1 million, they should make \$10 million.

"I loved playing basketball, for the Celtics and our fans. I remember sitting with Dennis Johnson at the end of one of our games. I turned to DJ and said, 'I just cannot believe that there are this many fans cheering for us, that they appreciate us the way they do.'

"I was very fortunate to play a game that I loved. It was such a high for seventeen years."

Bob Ryan of *The Boston Globe*, Bird's biographer, would marvel afterward at Bird's remarkable poise in this press conference, and the stark contrast between Bird in his first meeting with the Boston press and now was clear. In 1979, Bird signed with the Celtics and Reed, and the press initially was reserved, even subtly hostile; this on the wings of Bird's and Bob Woolf's salary squabble with the team. That day Bird mainly avoided eye contact with all, his eyes follow-

ing his swept-down hair, bangs on his young forehead. In August 1992, when the Bird playing era ended, Bird commanded the day; he eyed each questioner, he responded frankly, reflectively, all the time confessing that meeting the press was something he didn't particularly care for.

Amen. Bird never thought he would even marry, early in his career here. Now, WBZ-TV was asking Bird about the future, what he would tell Connor Bird — Larry and Dinah Bird's beloved son — about Bird's basketball career. Bird said he'd probably lie, but obviously the facts would belie the first fiction. Bird's #33 will be raised to the Garden rafters, and Bird made it clear he wanted this to take place at the old Garden. In 1996, Bird will be inducted into the Hall of Fame...Connor will know Larry wasn't lying.

Reality in the late 30th century being as complex as it is, Bird's final season in uniform was athletically tragic, intermittently joyful (29-5, December, '91 for friend Coach Chris Ford) and provocative. One or another of very advantageous moves by Auerbach, Jan Volk, et. al. was to lure Dave Gavitt from the Big East and, in turn, one of Gavitt's most important immediate stances, amazingly, was to defend Bird. After the team had been eliminated by New York in the first round of the playoffs in 1990, there were reports locally that the Celtics were considering trading Bird back home to the Pacers, a move Bird found intriguing once in fantasy, but not

Continued on Page 9

Bird Cover Story

Continued from page 8

now, late in his career. Was the rumor truth or fiction? Behind closed doors is murky, mysterious, but Bird was moved to make a public statement about the talk, saying that if he were traded, he'd likely retire — he wouldn't go. So in Gavitt's own first press conference as CEO, he had the moment to take a stance, and it was clear, definitive. "Larry Bird remains one of the all-time best, in my view," Gavitt stated. "I have no interest in trading him."

"I loved playing basketball, for the Celtics and our fans. I remember sitting with Dennis Johnson at the end of one of our games. I turned to DJ and said, 'I just cannot believe that there are this many fans cheering for us, that they appreciate us the way they do'."
— Larry Bird

It's such proclamations that insure the continuity of a great institution; win or lose, with Larry or without him, the team now continues. And now Bird's post-athletic career crisis is al-

ready being remedied somewhat — he's one of Gavitt's and Auerbach's assistants in the front office, fittingly alongside DJ, a scout there, the player Bird said "Is the best I ever played with."

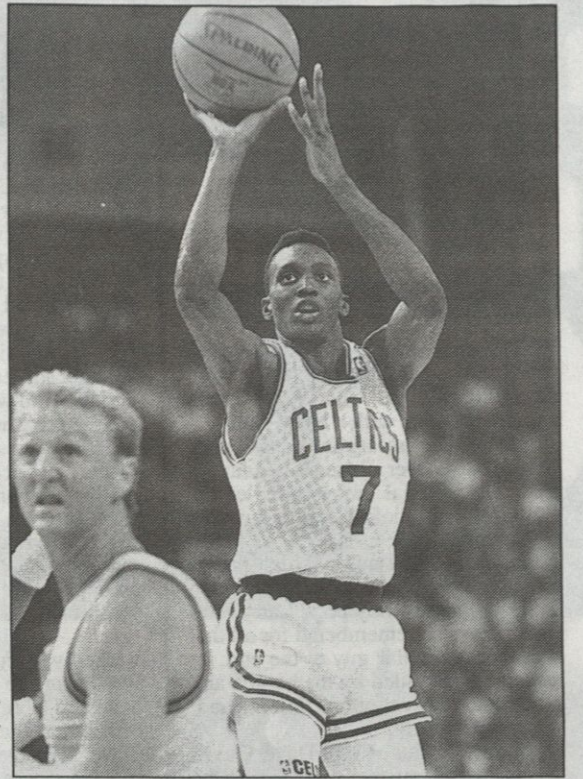
It's likely that, as Sinatra is to music, as DiMaggio is to baseball, so now is Larry Bird to basketball — Bill Russell, mostly because he suffered the pangs of discrimination, was never comfortable being an ambassador for the sport, and Bird, because he's private and proudly autonomous, likely won't be comfortable in the role either. But reportedly one of his roles for the team will be as a spokesman, and who better to represent the game than Bird, who delivered the game to new millions each night with such passion? It was just this quality Ford noted when his superstar called it a night.

Auerbach: "Larry is one of six you can make a case for as the best of all time. The others are Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Bill Russell, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Oscar Robertson. I wasn't as close to Larry as I was to, say, Cousy or Russell, because I didn't coach Larry. But I have a special affinity for Larry, the utmost admiration. He had the complete attitude of a champion. He played hurt and he was completely motivated to win.

"This is a very emotional day. We had three superstars who, when they retired, still could have played two more years — Russell, Havlicek, and Sam Jones. But they didn't, because they were tired mentally. It's different in Larry's instance. Injuries cut his career short."

The great Celtic Bird, whose career ended prematurely, wanted to keep going, indeed probably would have, but it seems as if the training, hope and renewed optimism at the recent Tournament of the Americas became invisible after the games began and he couldn't play in Portland after game one; when we received a last glimpse — and it was a glimpse — when Bird rebounded, hit the threes, teamed with Magic in the easy win over Cuba. Ryan related in this magazine later how difficult it was for Bird after that game. Bird's finished with playing now, and we all have our own images of his powerful, brilliant form of basketball.

Gavitt was asked if he had a memory of Bird. "I do," he said. "In the Olympics in Barcelona, the team was breaking up its practice and heading off to baskets for individual shooting drills. There were 4 new hoops, but one old rickety one, with a wooden backboard, from the 1940's. Larry and Chris Mullin ended up with that basket, and in the two minutes of shooting in the drill,



A new era is ready to begin in the Boston Garden.

the two of them made every single three-point shot. It was very special, in the modern Olympic setting, Larry and his great shooting partner Mullin, lighting up an old basketball hoop. There were just none better than Larry Bird." •

CELTICS VIDEO LIBRARY

To order, please use the order form on page 21

• **CELTICS VIDEO YEARBOOK 1985-86** •
NEW NEW NEW NEW NEW ITEM! The year of the "shooting stars." This exclusive video contains footage no one has ever seen before. Pre-game planning session, half-time huddles, post-game analyses. Re-live the most thrilling moments of the playoffs with the Houston Rockets. Experience the Celtics pain and their joy, share the excitement of their triumphs, witness quiet moments with family at home. 48 min.
#15.....\$39.95

• **HISTORY OF THE NBA** •
This new 1990 video will have you re-live five decades of dynasties and rivalries. Watch the incredible exploits of such legends of the game as Dave Cowen, Bill Walton, "Pistol" Pete Maravich, Larry Bird and more.
#48.....\$24.95

• **CELTICS '87** •
Home of the Brave 86-87 season plus Sweet Sixteen 85-86 Championship season. A powerhouse double feature re-living the 85-86 championship season. Go onto 86-87 when three time MVP Larry Bird and an injury plagued team battle the Lakers in the Finals. 60 min.
#77.....\$35.95

• **DYNASTY RENEWED** •
1981. Robert Parish and Kevin McHale joined Larry Bird to rebuild a new dynasty. They would face the 76'ers and Dr. J in a wild series that saw six of the seven games decided in the final minute. Witness all the action in the finals against the surprising Houston Rockets that will never be forgotten! 30 min.
#158.....\$24.95

• **1986 NBA ALL STAR WEEKEND** •
Experience the whole All-Star weekend starting with the Legends Classic, the Long Distance Shootout and the Slam dunk championship, and of course the game itself with Bird and McHale at their best.
#168.....\$29.95

• **NBA'S AWESOME ENDINGS** •
Here's the tape that definitely proves "it ain't over 'til it's over!" Includes the most incredible last second swishes, buzzer beating buckets, and zappy endings in NBA history. Larry's steals and assists in the 1987 playoffs enabling them to advance to the Finals over the Detroit Pistons. 30 minutes of incredible action.
#7.....\$17.95

• **RED ON ROUNDBALL** •
Learn basketball from the pros. Starring Red Auerbach and a host of basketball greats. Dave Cowens, Bob Cousy, Tiny Archibald, Elgin Baylor, Bill Walton, and more.
#34.....\$27.95

• **NBA SUPERSTARS** •
This is one to play and play again. Includes incredible footage of the NBA's leading superstars (Larry Bird) with spectacular superstar hit music! Billy Joel's "This is the Time," Whitney Houston's "Greatest Love of All," Janet Jackson's "Control" and many more. This 32-minute tape captures the spirit of the game like nothing else.
#8.....\$17.95

• **PRIDE AND PASSION** •
1984. The Celtics and Lakers re-live all the pride and passion as the NBA's most storied rivals climax in on of basketball's most exciting and memorable seasons. 60 min.
#153.....\$29.95

• **DREAM TEAM** •
The speculation is over... the ultimate NBA team has been chosen. Now for the first time on video, see the spectacular career highlights and intimate behind the scenes portraits of the team that dreams are made of.
#166.....\$19.95

• **NBA SUPERSTARS II** •
Basketball's most spectacular stars will star in their very own highlight filled music video. Packaged with each video will be a FREE cassette soundtrack from the video. Some of the players featured include: Larry Bird, Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan and more.
#169.....\$19.95

• **ONE SHINING MOMENT** •
The best of the NCAA Championships. The greatest players and the most unforgettable moments in the tournament's history. Larry Bird from Indiana, Bill Walton from UCLA, and many more.
#174.....\$19.95



By Kevin C. Doyle

He arrived a reticent country boy, the self-proclaimed "Hick from French Lick" who could perform wondrous deeds with a basketball.

He leaves as arguably the very best to have ever played the game, a true international ambassador of the sport, Olympic gold dangling proudly from his neck.

In an era of pampered, high-priced athletes who take whatever they can from the games they play, Larry Bird will forever be remembered for all that he gave. A regular guy to the end, he remained unspoiled by the hoopla and glitter and focused on the task at hand.

A regular guy? When Celtics' CEO Dave Gavitt proposed a champagne toast during the August 18th press conference announcing Bird's inevitable retirement, Larry shot back: "How 'bout a beer?"

A regular guy? At the press conference that heralded his signing in 1979, a reporter asked Bird how it felt to be a millionaire. Larry shook his head and cracked: "I forgot to tell Mr. Auerbach I'd play for nothin'."

And indeed he probably would have — his love of the game and the joy he derived from playing it was that great.

Bird was a player for the people and of the people. Everyman in shorts and Cons. Not endowed with the physical gifts of his peers, he didn't jump well and had a gait that some-

HALFCOURT PRESS

times resembled Grandpa McCoy's. Michael Jordan, Julius Erving, Dominique Wilkins and their ilk elevated the game far above the rim; constrained by the limits of gravity, Bird was a precise practitioner of the passing game, programmed to see numerous options before selecting the one most lethal to an opponent.

Let others rely on splendiferous talent — Bird countered with a wickedly sharp mind.

"From the neck to the top of his head and from his wrists to the tips of his fingers, Larry is the best basketball player I've ever seen," said Gavitt.

"He was a great player from the very beginning. Very few players can adapt to the NBA that quickly. The NBA was easy to him, but his competitiveness and desire continued. You knew every night you were going to get 110 percent from Larry Bird. That was his trademark," Charlotte Hornets coach Allan Bristow, a former player for Utah and Dallas who guarded Bird on many occasions, told The Associated Press.

Shrewd? "I remember when he came here 13 years ago he looked like a little country bumpkin. But, when you looked into his eyes you knew he was no dummy," said Auerbach, who pursued Bird from the time he drafted him as an Indiana State junior in 1978 and has called him the greatest player he's ever seen.

Tough? Hey, the guy only missed five games after having his cheekbone shattered by a stray Harvey Catchings elbow early in his career. And what of those players foolhardy enough to verbally challenge Bird, only to back down from the physical challenge when they saw the fire in his eyes.

The retirement comes as no surprise, Bird said as much in May when he told reporters "I'll let you know in September." The signs, though somewhat ambivalent, were there after the Olympics.

"It's a great way to end a career. It's a great way to start a career. The reason I played in these Olympics is because my career is winding down. It's a good way for me to go out a winner," he told the A.P.

After injuries required surgery on both heels in '89 and on his back last year, and after missing 59 games the past two years, Bird simply decided "enough is enough" after consulting with a cadre of medical personnel.

It was the right thing to do. It's not that he can't play the game any longer — his back won't let him. The man has nothing left to prove and there is no need to

THE VERY BEST TO HAVE PLAYED THE GAME

risk permanent damage pursuing what is, after all, a young man's game.

His individual accomplishments — Rookie of the Year ('80), MVP ('84, '85, '86), Play-off MVP ('84, '86), 11-time all-star — were

attained while operating as the consummate team player. Bird was one of those rare athletes who made every player on the court and every coach on the bench look better.

"His will to win, his competitive spirit, the ability to play hurt like no one I've ever seen," said coach and former teammate Chris Ford, summing up Bird.

Memories? I have a multitude, but my favorites are:

— Bird running down his own missed jumper from the right wing and flipping in an off-balance, left-handed shot as he sailed past the baseline in the '81 Championship Series against Houston;

— His post-up jumper over Magic Johnson in Game Four that evened the '84 Championship Series at two games apiece;

— Watching three Atlanta Hawks tumble off the end of the bench in disbelief in March of '85 after Bird drained an outrageous three-pointer with a defender practically tackling him the night he scored a club record 60 points;

— The '85 playoffs in Cleveland when, after sitting out a game and hearing Cavs' fans chant "We want Larry, we want Larry!", Bird retorted "You've got me, both barrels." Of course, he delivered and the Celtics wrapped up the series in the next game;

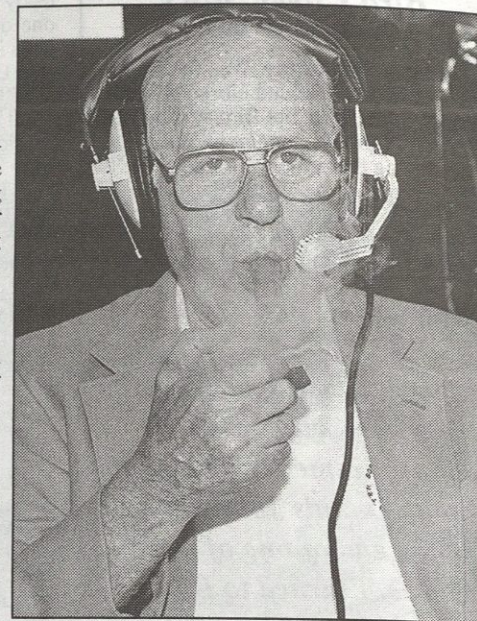
— His steal of an Isiah Thomas in-bounds pass and feed to Dennis Johnson for the game-winning basket with :01 left on the clock in the '87 Eastern Conference Finals against the Pistons;

— His 49-point, 14-rebound, 12-assist symphony on national television against Portland on March 15 of this year;

— The countless skidding belly-flops in pursuit of loose balls. Stars don't do that.

It's the stuff of legends. Unlike many alleged superstars, Bird was able to put his money where his mouth was and deliver the goods.

He will be forever linked with



Red: "When you looked into his eyes, you knew he was no dummy."

Magic, his soulmate from the Left Coast. The two began their personal battle in the '79 NCAA title game and continued it for 12-plus seasons.

Although Bird dismisses the notion as ludicrous, they have been credited with reviving a floundering league and for re-introducing the art of passing and the concept of team play into the game. Without their artistry, the NBA would not exist as we now know it.

"Larry Bird has helped define the way a generation of basketball fans has come to view and appreciate the NBA. In the future, great players will be judged against the standards he has set but there will never be another Larry Bird," noted Commissioner David Stern.

Like baseball's Joe DiMaggio, football's Jimmy Brown and boxing's Rocky Marciano, Bird left his profession with his skills intact.

In the final analysis, his legacy is clear.

"When I played, I played as hard as I could. That's what I want to be remembered for," he said.

For that, and much, much more. On that point, there can be no argument. ●



Gavitt: "He was a great player from the beginning. Very few players can adapt to the NBA that quickly."



Don't Miss Out On

CELTICS PRIDE

EACH ISSUE CONTAINS

- In-depth Player Profiles
- Action Photography
- Incisive Interviews
- Comprehensive Columnists
- Game By Game Summaries
- History & Trivia

AND MUCH MUCH MORE!

20 COLORFUL ISSUES EACH YEAR FOR ONLY

\$36⁰⁰

Send your check or money order with

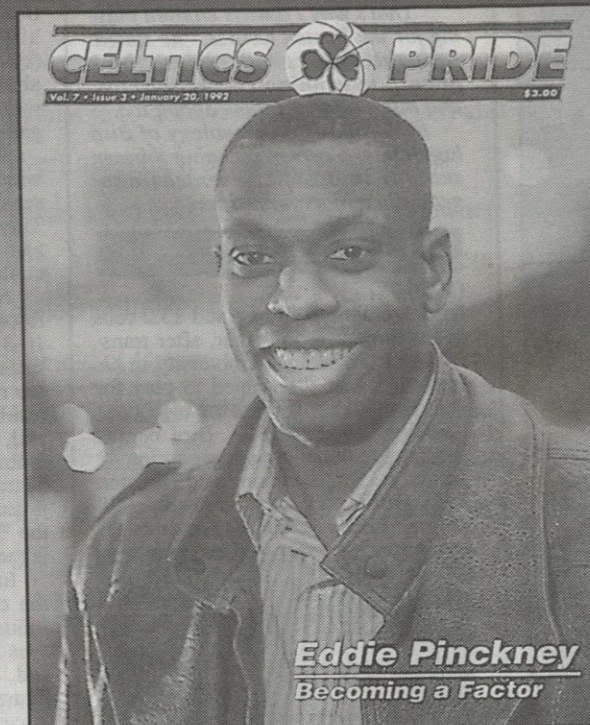
the coupon to the right or use your

Visa or MasterCard by calling toll free

1-800-344-FANN

or fax to (203) 329-9126.

The Only Newspaper Devoted Exclusively To The Celtics Basketball Fan



CELTICS PRIDE • 85 Old Long Ridge Road • Stamford, CT 06903

☐ Please send me:

☐ A one-year (20 issues) subscription to CELTICS PRIDE for \$36.00

☐ New Subscription ☐ Renewal

☐ Start my one-year (20 issues) subscription to CELTICS PRIDE for \$36.00 and send _____ one-year (20 issues) gift subscription(s) for \$36.00 to the individual(s) listed below.

☐ Do not send me a subscription, but do send _____ one-year (20 issues) gift subscriptions to CELTICS PRIDE to the individual(s) listed below for \$36.00 each.

Canadian subscriptions are \$66.00 and foreign subscriptions are \$110.00.

Total of order \$ _____

☐ My check or money order payable to CELTICS PRIDE is enclosed.

☐ Charge to my: ☐ VISA ☐ MC Exp. Date: _____

Card # _____

Signature _____ Phone # () _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

PERSON TO RECEIVE GIFT SUBSCRIPTION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

This gift is for (Christmas, birthday, etc.) _____

Please send a gift card and sign it from. _____

Charges will appear as Weston Sports Publishing Company, Inc., on your bank statement.

THE BIRD ERA

When the great Larry Bird announced his retirement from the game, he noted that if he had to choose, three highlights would illuminate his career with the Celtics, in his memory. First, in the 1981 Finals, Bird connected on a long 3-point field goal from the left corner, icing the deciding Celtic victory in game six over the Rockets.

The second memory was from 1984, game four in the Forum, also in the Finals. Bird's reverse turnaround in the right low post over Magic Johnson finalized a series of lead changes in OT which finally ended in a crucial 134-129 win in the C's eventual title series victory against the Lakers.

Finally: "I was never more motivated for a game than I was in game six against Houston in 1986 (the Finals, for the C's Sweet Sixteen title victory). I didn't play that well, but I knew I wouldn't lose that game." Permit the great Bird some aggrandizement; he went for a triple-double, in a game he remembers "not playing that well." Fitting, that Bird's personal career highlights refer back to games in seasons in which the Celtics won championships.

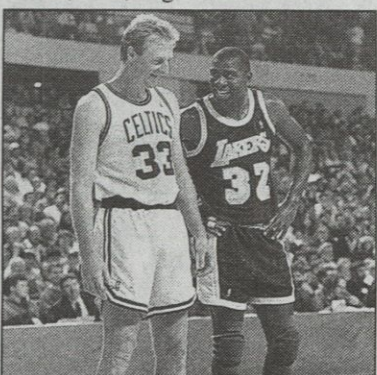
"That's why I always enjoyed playing for the Boston Celtics," he stated. "All the Celtics talk about...think about...is winning championships, and that's all that I think about, too."

Following is a chronology of Bird highlights, a career spanning thirteen seasons in Boston, seventeen altogether in major competition.

INDIANA STATE

(1976-79)
Bird averages 30.3 ppg and 13.2 rebs in his three season career, after transferring from Indiana University in his freshman year ("I wanted to play for Bob Knight, but IU was too big.")

Highlights: In 1977, Bird begins attracting national attention, scoring 44 points vs. Otis Birdsong and Houston in an 84-83 NIT loss. After the 1978 season, Bird, eligible for the draft be-

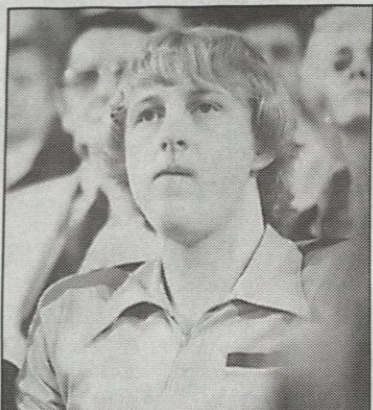


Nobody will ever forget the Bird/Magic rivalry that evolved into a lasting friendship.

cause of the transfer, is taken by an elated Red Auerbach, delighted the 6'9 power-small forward with the passing skill of Cousy, slipped to #6 in the draft.

In 1979, Bird virtually single-handedly takes the Sycamores almost to The Promised Land. In the NCAA's, Bird sweeps by All-Americans Sidney Moncrief and Arkansas (35 points), DePaul in the semis (17-21 FGs, 35 pts, 20 rebs) and into the final round. In his first clash with Magic Johnson — Mich-

igan State, 75-61. Bird, triple teamed and versus a box-and-one, scores 24.



The "young hick from French Lick" was shy in front of the media following the signing of his first Celtic contract.

BEST ROOKIE, FIRST TITLE

(1979-81)

"When I went through salary negotiations with the Celtics," Bird said at his press conference, "I had no idea how seriously Boston cared about basketball. I knew they had won titles, but they won only 29 games the year before I played."

Bird went on to say how he felt he was being tested at his first rookie camp session, as veterans Dave Cowens, Tiny Archibald and M.L. Carr played against him. "But after that, I knew I could play in the league."

Highlights: In 1979-80, Bird wins Rookie of the Year, averaging 21.2 ppg, 10.3 rebs and is 12th in the NBA in steals. The Celtics, driven by their superstar rookie, go from 29-53 to 61-21. The result: the regular season championship and, to that point, the greatest turnaround ever. Bird is named NBA First Team, the first of nine straight selections. His 3-point field goal in OT keys the East to a 144-135 win. The Three is the first in that game's history.

In 1980-81, Bird leads the team to the championship and is second to Julius Erving in MVP voting. He averages 21.9 ppg, 14 rebs in the playoffs and, in dramatic fashion, is the key figure in the team's come-from-behind 7-game series win over Philadelphia. He scores the winning basket in game 7 for the 91-90 win, declaring, "There was no one else in the world I wanted to take that shot but me."

REACHING THE PEAK

(1982-83)

"I felt that, beginning with the first title year, I began playing at a level that was among the best," he said.

Highlights: In 1982, Bird suffers a fractured cheekbone, but nevertheless is the best 6th man in history, coming off the bench as the team sets a Celtic record by winning 18 straight games. Bird wins All-Star Game MVP with 19 points, 12 rebounds in the East's 120-118 win. The following year, Bill Fitch's final one as coach of the Celtics, sees Bird begin improving personal states; in a disappointing C's season, swept 4 straight by Milwaukee in the playoffs, Bird averages 23.9 ppg. On March 30, he sets a Celtic record with 53 points against Indiana.

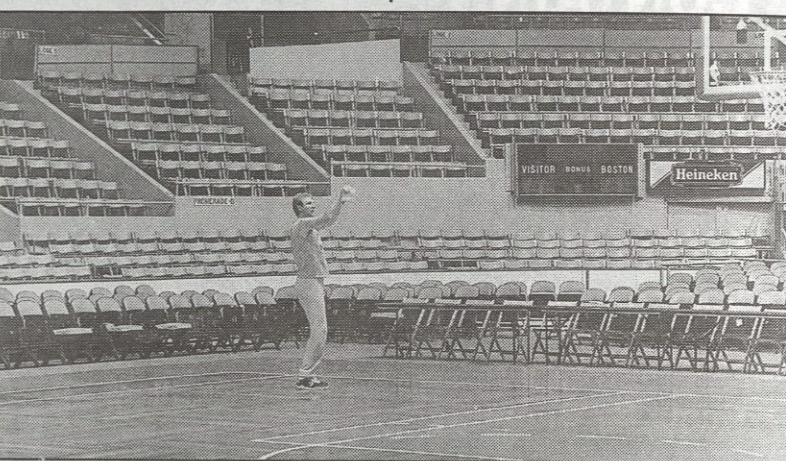
"MVP, MVP, MVP"

(1984-1986)

Under K.C. Jones, and with the arrival of Dennis Johnson as defensive stopper-point guard *extraordinaire*, Bird enters his prime, winning three straight regular season MVP designations.

Highlights: In 1984, the C's defeat Magic Johnson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and the Lakers in the Finals, a bicoastal match that sets a TV ratings mark, as had Bird's clash with Johnson in the NCAA's. Bird has two memorable playoff games. He notches 39 pts, 15 rebs, 15 assists vs. Bernard King and the Knicks in game seven, causing Hubie Brown to label Bird "Sir Galahad." In 100 degree heat in game five in the Finals, Bird shoots 15-20 field goals for a key win in the Garden and says afterward, "In the heat, I just run harder, to create more wind for myself." He is playoff MVP.

In 1985, Bird's scoring begins a quantum leap to 28.2 ppg. Herein, he breaks Kevin McHale's 10-day old C's scoring mark (56) by tallying 60 against the Hawks in New Orleans. At mid-season he wins back-to-back games at the buzzer, scoring 47 against Portland and 32 the next night against Detroit. Bird makes the series winning steal vs. Tony and the Sixers to send the team to the Finals.



Larry's hard work and dedication made him the legend he has become.

In 1986 Bird again wins the regular season and playoff MVPs. The C's win 66 games and, with Bill Walton joining Robert Parish and Danny Ainge in key roles, the C's are 50-1 in the Garden. Bird averages triple-double in the Finals.

THE LONG ROAD, ENDING

(1986-88)

Jones' era concludes here, but Bird remains driven. "I thought I was playing my best ball in 1987-88, but then I hurt my ankle," Bird said. "I was able to shake off all my injuries. Except one." Bird would never fully recover after June, 1991, back surgery.

Highlights: In a crucial related development, Len Bias dies from a drug overdose, a superstar lost, which affects the team still. In '86-'87, one season after Sweet Sixteen, the C's, literally taken down with injuries to the entire team (McHale and Walton: down with stress fractures), still make the Finals against Johnson, Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar and Cooper at their peak. The C's reach the Finals because of Bird's miraculous

steal vs. Isiah Thomas and the oncoming Pistons in game five of the Eastern Conference finals at the Garden. Bird zips in electrically, swipes the ball, and feeds DJ for a 108-107 win.

1987-88 was Bird's final great stat season, 29.9 ppg. Bird again insures the C's entry into the East finals with a pair of special performances in the Atlanta quarter series. In game two he sets a single quarter scoring record with 24 as the C's lead the series early. The C's are forced to win a great game six in Atlanta to keep their back-to-back hopes alive. In game seven Bird fights off Dominique Wilkins and the Hawks' charge in a man-on-man shootout in the fourth quarter. Bird tallies 20, with a series of amazing shots, and Wilkins scores 18, but the C's win.

FAMOUS FINAL SCENE

(1988-92)

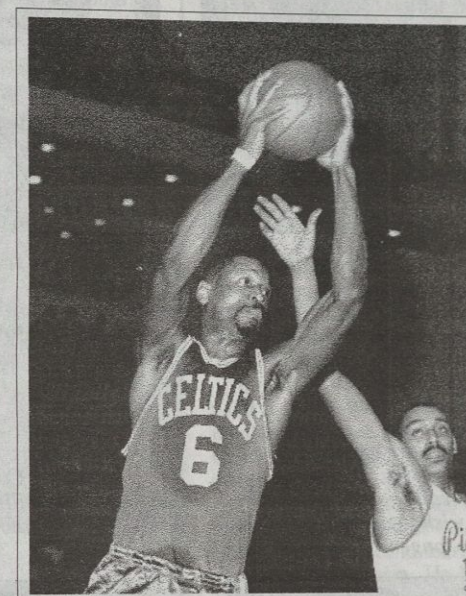
Injuries start ending Bird's reign as one of the game's best. Achilles tendon surgery ends his '88-'89 season after six games. In 1989-90 he tallies 71 straight free throws (.890 career) for the second best streak ever, but the C's season and Jim Rodgers' coaching career ends in a first round playoff defeat to New York. Bird's final two seasons end in disappointment, with second round defeats to Detroit in '91 and Cleveland in '92.

For 28 years, a Bill Russell autograph was an impossible dream...until now!

Hall of Famer Bill Russell is arguably the greatest basketball player to ever play the game. He also has not signed an autograph in 28 years! Consequently, a Bill Russell autograph offers a rare and unique opportunity to obtain a significant piece of sports memorabilia.

Now through an exclusive agreement, Field of Dreams™ has been given the responsibility of presenting a selection of quality products that will be offered on a limited basis to the public.

Mr. Russell will personally sign and number each item. Field of Dreams™ will provide a corresponding numbered authenticity certificate and will register the collector in a permanent file.



Never before has the opportunity been available to document and record each and every autograph of an individual. This verification and historical record of ownership will give added value to the long term collectability.

Field of Dreams™ has selected four items to initially offer to the collector. Mr. Russell will sign 250 uniforms, 1000 basketballs and 100 pairs of shoes. Signed 8x10 photos will also be available.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity with limited product availability. No collection is complete without a Bill Russell autograph. So call Field of Dreams™ and order your exclusive Bill Russell autographed collectible today!

Bill Russell Collectibles:

Autographed Celtics Jersey (limited to 250 pcs.) \$995ea.

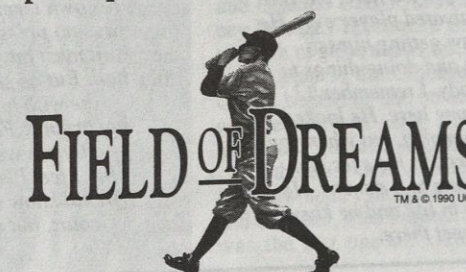
Autographed basketball (limited to 1000 pcs.) \$495 ea.

Autographed pair of basketball shoes (limited to 100 pcs.) \$495 ea.

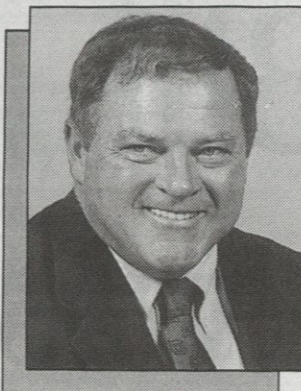
Autographed 8x10 photo \$295 ea.

Autographed personal items (call for information)

Visa, Mastercard,
American Express & Discover
accepted



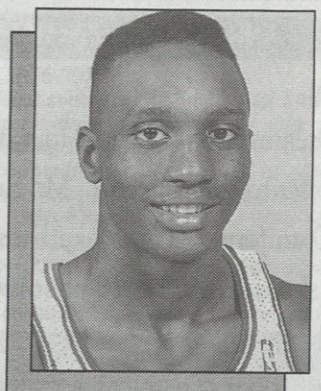
To order or more info call: (619) 773-1796 Mon.-Fri 9-5 (PDT) or write to: Field of Dreams™ 72-027 Desert Dr., Rancho Mirage, CA 92270 (incl. phone #)



Dave Gavitt

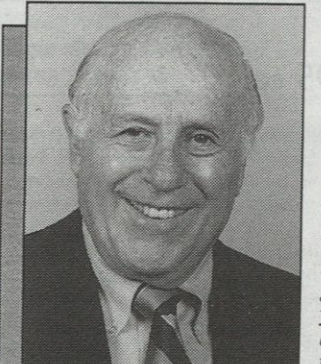
Dave Gavitt — He's definitely among the five greatest players to ever play the game. God may not have given him an All-World body, but from his shoulders to the top of his head and from his wrist to the tips of his fingers, he was the greatest player I've seen, and his heart was five times bigger than anyone I've seen.

Chris Ford — As a player and a teammate, he was the best. He helped me get the gold ring. Playing with Larry and then being around him as a coach is one of the highlights of my basketball career. I was with him as a teammate for one championship and as an assistant coach for two more. He made everyone around him a better player.



Dee Brown

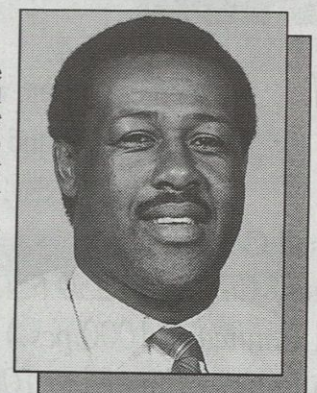
M.L. Carr (who Bird called the "funnest" teammate he ever played with) — I knew this was coming but it's still a shocker. He brought so much to the game. He was the first forward who could do everything — he was the best passing forward, went inside to get the tough rebound and over a game he would beat you plenty of times down the court.



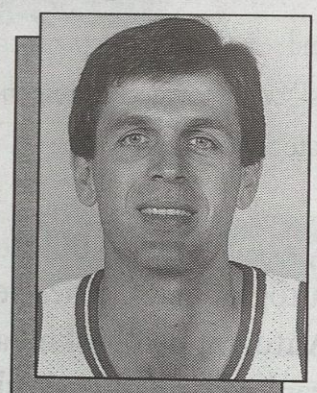
Red Auerbach

Red Auerbach — Not putting down any other player who ever played here, but Bird was the most self-motivated player ever. He was the best I ever saw getting himself ready for every game and doing things to get his teammates ready. I remember 13 years ago when he came here. He looked like a little country bumpkin, but when you talked to him and looked in his eyes, you knew you weren't talking to a dummy. He knew what he wanted in life and he knew what it would take to get there.

Dee Brown — I wish everyone could have the experience of playing with Larry Bird. Of the things I have to put in my basketball memory book right now, playing with him would have to be number one. He taught me a lot of things and I'm really going to miss him. I really wish I could have played with him longer.

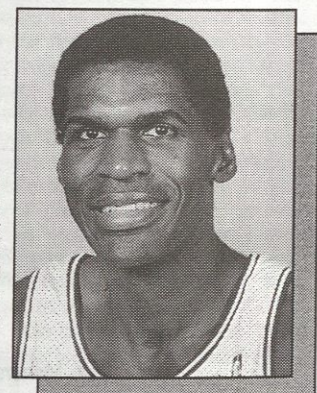


M.L. Carr



Kevin McHale

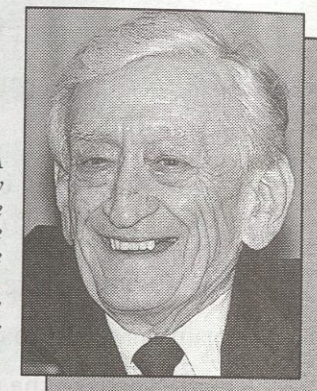
Kevin McHale — Larry Bird was special. No question about it. And it was a pleasure to play with him... (on the long alleged cool relationship between Bird and himself) Larry was a good friend. We got along better than everyone said we did.



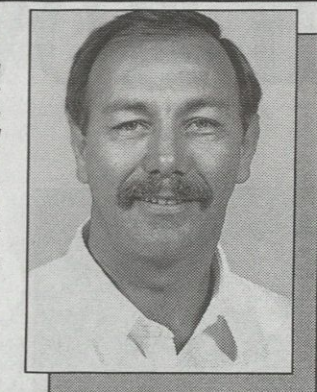
Robert Parish

Robert Parish — He was able to leave on his own terms and I'm happy for him. There was no pressure on him to leave or stay. But it must have been tough, like giving up the ball. But he can still play golf and tennis and be with his wife and the little Bird. That's important... For me, it's definitely a void. Not only are we losing a great player in Larry, but I feel like I'm losing a very good friend. We all know about Larry's great feats on the court, but what I'm really going to miss is the friendship and the person.

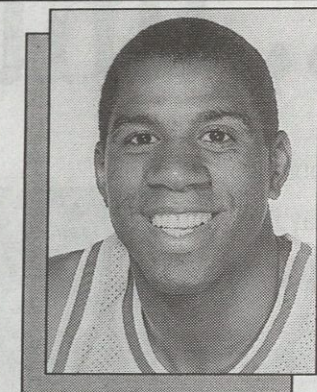
Johnny Most — It's like a void. A vacuum suddenly appeared in my itinerary, because he won't be around. When Cousy left, the Celtics got past that. The same thing happened when Russell, Cowens and Havlicek left. No one will ever replace Larry Bird, just as no one replaced those other guys.



Johnny Most



Chris Ford



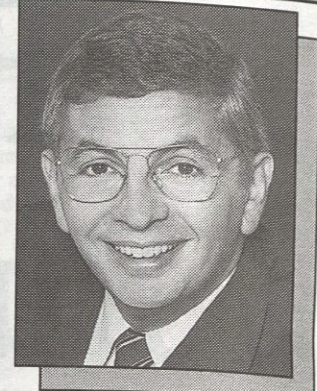
Magic Johnson

Magic Johnson — Larry was the only player in the league that I feared and he was the smartest player I ever played against. I always enjoyed competing against him because he brought out the best in me. Even when we weren't going head-to-head, I would follow his game because I always used his play as a measuring stick against mine.

With the retirement of Larry Bird on August 18th, one of the truly great careers in the history of professional sports came to an end. Over his 13 year career as a Boston Celtic, Bird played in 1,061 games, counting both the regular and post seasons, scored 25,696 points (24.2 per game), grabbed 10,653 rebounds (10.1) and dished out 6,757 assists (6.4), while shooting nearly 50 percent from the floor, 90 percent from the foul line and .376 from 3-point land. He led the Celtics to three world championships, won three League MVP Awards, was named All-NBA first team his first eight years in the league and was voted to the All-Star Game every year he was available. All this, however, only begins to tell the story of what the man known worldwide as Larry Legend meant to his team, his city, his league and his game. Below you can find a little more of the story.

PERSPECTIVE

WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS AFTER HEARING OF LARRY BIRD'S RETIREMENT?



David Stern

David Stern (NBA Commissioner) — Quite simply, Larry Bird has helped to define the way a generation of basketball fans have come to view and appreciate the NBA. In the future, great players will be judged against the standards he has set, but there will never be another Larry Bird.

A Long Shot

Darren Morningstar's Chances Are Slim Despite Fan Approval

By Mike Spellman

Too bad for Darren Morningstar that fans and media don't have a say in who does and doesn't make the Celtics. If we did, the second round pick would be a lock.

As it is, Morningstar must at the present time be considered a longshot to survive the final cut. The 6'11-240 pound Pitt product is only marginally athletic and talented, and by no stretch of the imagination could comparisons between his own basketball prowess and that of the incumbent pivotmen he is competing against — Robert Parish, Kevin McHale or Joe Kleine — be made.

However, for whatever it's worth, he has already won over many who support and report on Boston's basketball team. At the Celtics annual rookie/free agent camp in early July, Morningstar was an instant hit among those in attendance — captivating fans with his hard-nosed, relentless style on the court and the media with this plus his effervescent and loquacious manner off of it.

"I'm just on a natural high," Morningstar gushed to a group of reporters following one of the camp workouts. "I love life. I guess you could say I'm a character."

A "character"?...Yes, you could say that.

Did anyone see this guy on draft night (on TNT) moments after the Celtics made him their second round pick (47th overall)...muttonchop sideburns down to his jawbone, a slicked back coif that would make even Pat Riley blush, perspiring heavily, and talking and talking and talking about his shock over the fact that he wasn't selected considerably higher, his respect for the Celtics and his plans to come to Boston and "rock and roll."

Watching this from draft headquarters inside the Boston Garden's Board n'Blades Club, most all of the few fans and media types still on hand had to smile. Titters ringing with delight and surprise came from all sections of the room, most heavily it seemed from the head table where the team's hierarchy was still seated.

"I'm on a mission," Morningstar stated a short time later. "With the Celtic tradition behind me, I plan on beating up on every team that didn't draft me."

But is this "Mission Impossible?"

"He's got an awful lot to learn," Celtics Head Coach Chris Ford offered toward the end of rookie/free agent camp, when asked to assess the second rounder's performance.

At the present time, the first nine roster spots are virtually cast in stone

(Parish, McHale, Kleine, Eddie Pinckney, Rick Fox, Reggie Lewis, Kevin Gamble, Dee Brown and Sherman Douglas), and that number includes two noteworthy exemptions: the still unsigned first round pick Jon Barry and last year's starting point guard John Bagley, an unrestricted free agent who the Celts are very interested in re-signing.

That makes 11 — just one shy of the roster limit.

And even if neither Bagley or Barry are around to start the 1992-93 season, or the Celtics make a lopsided trade that frees up another spot, Morningstar would be far from a lock, especially if Parish, McHale and Kleine remain part of the picture.

If the Celtics go bargain hunting, their first priority is going to be finding one or two young athletes who can play the power forward spot, and Morningstar appears to have neither the physical ability or skills to play anything other than center. With Bird now retired and McHale not far behind, the coaching staff took a long look at several players who fit the above description at rookie/free agent camp — among them NBA experienced Joe Wolf, Brian Quinnett, Tellis Frank and Walter Berry and undrafted Alabama product Marcus Webb, who was easily the most pleasant surprise of camp.

Of course, the fact that the Celtics thought enough of Morningstar to take him with their second pick says something, and the team does need a "center of the future" with Parish, McHale and Kleine soon to turn 39.35 and 31, respectively.

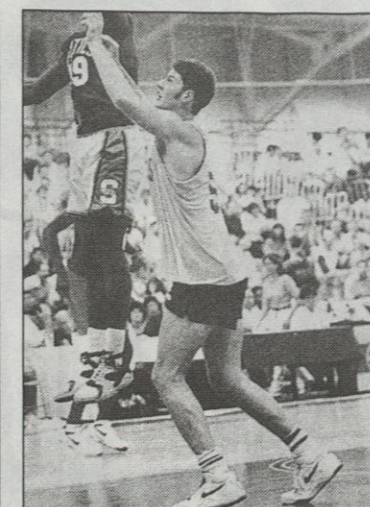
Clearly, however, Darren will need a lot of work just to earn this mantle. But, then, that would seem to be the one thing people need not be concerned with in the rookie's case.

"The thing about Darren is he gives his best effort every time out," assessed Ford. "He has a lot to learn, but he's got great enthusiasm. He has a very aggressive game and that's something you may be able to build on."

"Hey, I know I'm an underdog, but I've been in this situation before and made the most of it," said Morningstar, who was considered a long shot to be drafted at all until turning in sterling performances at a couple of the post-season all-star tournaments for collegiate seniors.

Surrounded by several much more highly lauded big men at both venues (P.J. Brown, Sean Rooks, Matt Geiger, Elmore Spencer, Robert Werdann, Reggie Smith, Oliver Miller and Pop-ey Jones, to name a few), Morningstar became the only player to be named to the All-Star Teams at both the Portsmouth Invitational (where he averaged 17.7 points and 7 rebounds) and Orlando Classic (16 points, tourney best 12.7 rebounds). Based on the strength of these showings, he decided not to play in the Chicago Pre-Draft Camp, believing that he had sewn up no later than an early second round spot and a guaranteed contract.

Of the 24 seniors who chose to simply show up in Chicago to be measured and weighed, Morningstar, taken 47th, was the last one selected, 15 spots



Darren: "I want to be the Bill Laimbeer of Boston."

behind the next to last (Brent Price). And, incidentally, he was also taken behind the eight big men listed parenthetically in the previous paragraph.

If he could go back, Morningstar said he would have played in Chicago, but that doesn't mean he's changed his feeling about deserving to go higher.

"I felt like I had been blackballed," said Morningstar, reflecting back to his thoughts on draft night. "I mean these guys going ahead of me were guys I had just played against and beaten out a lot of them. If I had to do it over again, I'd have played (in Chicago). I guess I'll just have to beat out those same guys again."

So now he must prove himself again. No problem, he says.

"If Coach Ford tells me he needs a rebound, a pick, a pass, I can make the play," professes Morningstar. "It's a matter of being able to perform in clutch situations and I can do that. I can be real good for this league. I'm praying I make this team."

In case you can't tell, Boston is Morningstar's team of choice.

"I'm here now with the attitude that I'm a Boston Celtic and that I'm going to be a Boston Celtic for life," he stated proudly. "I pleaded with them when I was here to draft me. I'm just looking forward to playing for the greatest organization in the history of basketball."

"I think it was the Lord's doing, my going to Boston. My ego had been hurt by not getting picked a lot higher, and the only team that could have snapped me out of my funk was the Boston Celtics." Morningstar may be confident, but he's not dumb — his 3.71 gpa earned while studying at Pitt's Graduate School of Business is ample testimony to that. He recognizes his limitations and knows that if he entertains any thoughts of sticking here he's going to have to try to offer something the team doesn't have.

"The Celtics need someone who can be an enforcer-type player," observed the rook. "That's how I play the game. I feel I'm at my best in a physical game." And, not realizing the political ramifications of his vision, added cheerfully, "I want to be the Bill Laimbeer of Boston." ●

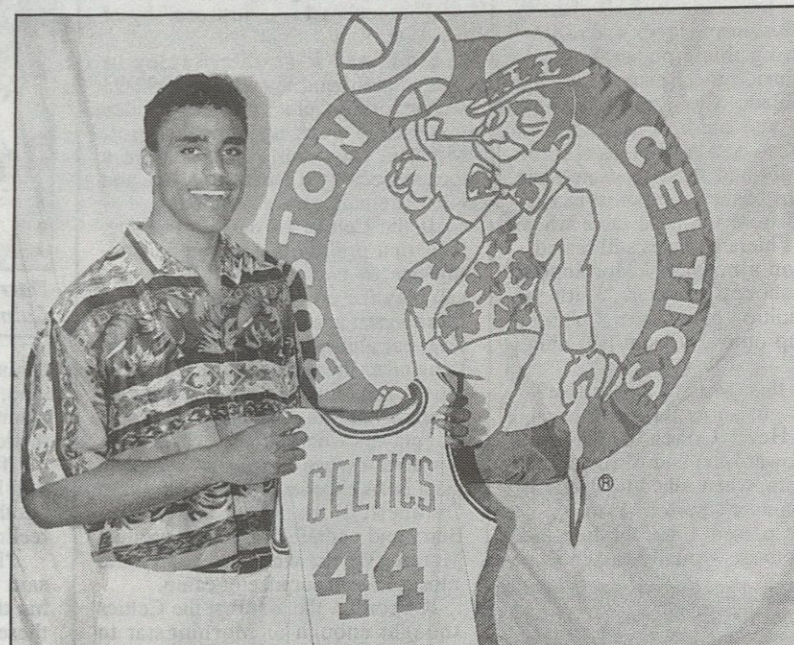
Larry Bird

PORTRAIT OF A BASKETBALL LEGEND

A personally autographed limited edition print by artist Allen Hackney and Pro Sport Images. For more information on this full color lithograph please call 1-800-382-3075.

PRO SPORT IMAGES
THE LEADER IN LIMITED EDITION SPORTS ART

Make Fox Your First Pick!



When you're in the market for your next new car, why not follow the Celtics lead and pick Fox first. Fox Toyota, that is, the Official Car Dealership of the Boston Celtics.

Like the Celtics, Fox Toyota has a long tradition of excellence. New Englanders are proud that the Celtics are the single most successful franchise in professional sports with 16 World Championships. The Fox Toyota team is equally proud of their performance over the years.

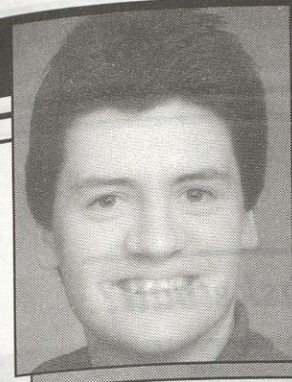
Fox Toyota has won the prestigious Toyota President's Award for five consecutive years, which recognizes their performance by their customers. And the Fox Toyota team is the only dealership nationwide to achieve the Toyota Service Excellence Award for 12 consecutive years, an award acknowledging their commitment to quality service.

When tradition, excellence and performance are important to you, visit Fox Toyota...tell them Rick sent you!

The Official Car Dealership Of The Boston Celtics



Fox Toyota • 415 Taunton Ave. • Rte. 44 • E. Providence, RI 02914
401-438-0350



By Mike Spellman

I've composed 100 different leads for this story over the last few years, most of them, in my opinion, at least for me, gems. I jotted down a dozen or so more good ones on August 18th after I received The News. Suddenly, however, with emotions running high and a blank computer screen staring back at me, there isn't one that seems near adequate.

The majority of my previous ideas for a final tribute to the career of Larry Bird focussed on the man, his unprecedented accomplishments and what he came to mean to sports fans the world over, particularly those from this region of the country. But after reading the brilliant and moving farewells offered by the likes of Bob Ryan, Dan Shaughnessy, Steve Bulpett, Joe Fitzgerald, Mike Fine, Jim Fenton and so many other talented writers, I've come to the conclusion that the only way in which I can satiate this deep desire to present something about Larry that will stand apart and maybe even be remembered by a few people is to try to express as best I can what he has been to me and me alone.

Let me start out here by simply saying that Larry Bird is to me the greatest athlete of all time. Don't waste your time trying to convince me otherwise. I have no intention of being rational where this topic is concerned. You see, it comes down to this: I can say with near certainty that no other sports figure will ever come to mean as much to me as he has these last 14 years (I must, of course, include his wondrous senior year at Indiana State, which we in New England kept close tabs on knowing he was coming to the Celtics when it was over). No matter how eloquent, well thought out or documented the argument on behalf of Magic, Michael, Wilt, Bill, Elgin, Dr. J or whoever might be, I ain't listening.

In June of 1978, Larry Joe Bird became the sixth pick overall by the

Celtics in the NBA draft, despite the fact that he had one more year of eligibility at Indiana State. Mike Spellman was at that time your typical 14-year old All-American lunk-head jock and sports junkie. I knew well and played often the four sports that mattered. Baseball was my favorite. I can't remember which was number two — football, hockey and basketball usually took turns

in those days, depending on what the neighborhood gang reached a consensus on on any given day.

Today, I am a basketball addict, and those other three sports are now merely occasional diversions. I'm proud to say I possess a great appreciation for my sport. Most of my friends tease me about my "obsession." It drives my wife crazy. But what can I do? Basketball makes me happy. Watching or participating in it played at a peak level provides me with a natural high that's tough to rival.

I don't really care how silly or foolish this sounds: I love basketball and I'm thankful for the place it has in my life. I am therefore thankful to Larry Bird, because I realize that were it not for him and his association with my hometown team, this quite possibly wouldn't be the case, and instead right now I'd likely be living and dying with the Red Sox (obviously, doing more of the latter than the former).

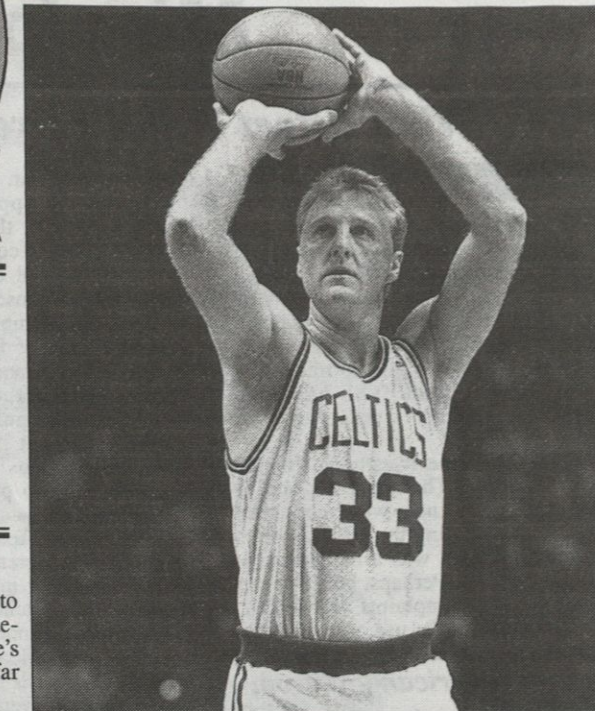
I am one of the hundreds of thousands worldwide whose way of regarding basketball was metamorphosed because of Larry Bird. We are all, of course, familiar with the pervasive observation that Larry, along with Magic Johnson, virtually by themselves, took a game dominated by selfishness and one dimensional players and turned it into the ultimate team sport, as there was no phase of the game — shooting, scoring, rebounding, passing, ballhandling, defense — the pair didn't concentrate on, work at and excel in. Before long, thanks in large part to where they both landed in the NBA and to their captivating though distinctly opposite personalities, their example caught on and spread like wildfire, and the rest is history.

But even beyond that, simply because of what Bird could do with a basketball, he served as a life inspiration. The way he dominated in every area of the game in spite of obvious physical shortcomings could give hope to every marginally skilled or under confident kid out there — regardless of what the undertaking was. Though there were obviously some unique gifts there as well, Larry's legacy was and still is universal:

NOTHING

BUT NET

THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER LARRY BIRD



Larry Bird is, to me, the greatest athlete of all time.

commit yourself to something wholeheartedly and there's no telling how far you can go.

One thing you should know about me here is that, basically, I am a little lazy. I admit it: if there is a shortcut that's not too slipshod, I'm generally gonna go for it. Every now and again, however, as occurs in everyone's life, there arises a need for me to bust my arse and do things the "old fashioned way." As corny as this might sound, I must admit that frequently at these times my head fills with thoughts of Larry and what he did with his life, and though it doesn't generally relate much at all to my situation, I feel this helps me over the hurdles. The association between hard work and my sports idol is now instinctive, what's more it is a resource.

I guess that just leaves me to talk about today, where, as much as I realize Larry's retirement is ultimately for the best, I am in mourning.

Naturally, that part of my brain that dictates reasoning has provided rationale after rationale for why Larry's decision to leave now was the right one: finishing in grand style with an Olympic gold medal, the risk of permanent injury if he continues playing, the frustration he feels having to constantly compromise himself, the loss he feels when he no longer has the ability to simply enforce his will on a game, the likelihood that he would not be available much if he returned anyway, the tenuous mindset his "day-to-day" availability could create for his team and the rest of the organization, the rest of the team as constituted has shown they are ready to stand on their own, the fact that Reggie is primed to takeover as The Man on the Celtics. There are other rationales, but these are the biggies.

It is that part of my brain that makes possible emotion and sentiment, however, that has me wishing through all the reasoning that Larry could have kept playing. There are also a lot of thoughts connected to this feeling — most of them selfish in origin.

I'm tempted to say I'd be happy with just one more great game — you know, of the type he proved he can still have in what turned out to be the second to final game of his career (Game 6 of the Cleveland series) — or even one last unforgettable high-

light. I've even almost convinced myself that this would be enough. But, of course, it wouldn't be.

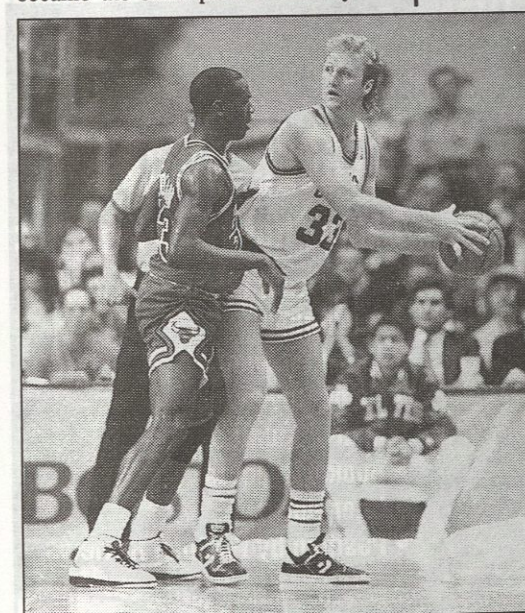
Quite simply, I am not emotionally prepared for The Bird Era to end. I've felt for years now that the only way I would be able to accept it is if Larry, Kevin and Robert went out together, and if they did that on the heels of one last championship I honestly don't think I would have been the least bit melancholy. Now, of course, I'll never know.

Inevitably, there will be comparisons to Bird in the future to many other well rounded, versatile big men. It has, of course, become popular in the last few weeks for basketball insiders and other close followers to say there will never be another Larry Bird. It goes without saying that down the road at some point many of these people will back off from or even contradict this position they're stating so resolutely today.

Speaking for myself, however, as I believe should be quite discernable above, I know there will never be another Larry Bird.

CLOSING THOUGHT: I had, until Larry's announcement, intended to devote much of this space to I'affair Jon Barry — you know, the Celtics' first round pick this year (21st overall), the guy who turned down the team's multi-year contract offer starting with \$500,000 for his rookie season and then also decided against taking part in both the C's annual rookie/free agent camp and the New York Summer League, and because of that most of the Boston basketball backing population seem ready to string up, despite the fact that training camp is still some six weeks away and only seven of the 27 first rounders have reached agreement, which includes none who were taken between 19 and 26, thereby making it tough to determine market value for most of them.

Fortunately, my message to those aforementioned fans on this matter, which I had originally drafted to take up a reasonable portion of my allotted space here, can be pretty much summed up in a word: relax. ●



Larry's legacy is universal.

CELTICS PRIDE

Mission Accomplished?

What Effect Will the Dream Team Have on International Basketball?

By Kevin C. Doyle

As expected, the primary goal was accomplished with little significant resistance.

The Dream Team crushed Croatia twice, laced Lithuania, blitzed Barcelona and struck Olympic gold. Our competitive egos soothed, the embarrassment of 1988 has been forgotten and all is right with the basketball world.

From the time it gathered for the Tournament of The Americas until it departed Spain, there were those who argued that sending the NBA all-stars to the Olympics was a macho exercise in overkill. Perhaps, but they can take up their complaints with FIBA, which approved the use of pro in the

Every American kid, from youth sports on up, is brought up on the notion that you only get better by playing against athletes better than yourself. Why should we expect athletes from other countries to be any different?

Olympics. The international governing body simply gave official approval to a practice many countries had engaged in for some time.

While it is apparent any group of NBA players — and perhaps the CBA — would've won the gold medal, there is no guarantee that college players could have handled Croatia or Lithuania.

Get past that discussion and what was accomplished? What lasting imprint will the Dream Team's success leave on the international game?

Charles Barkley noted that to him, the Olympics were nothing more than an extended business trip. All signs point to it being an incredibly suc-

cessful one at that.

Given the opportunity to send their very best, the NBA scored a major marketing coup. European fans are well-versed on the American game and for those fortunate enough to be at the Olympics, it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see Larry, Magic, Michael and Friends in a virtuoso performance. Basketball's world-wide popularity has grown to the point that it has drawn even with and perhaps surpassed soccer as both the top participatory and spectator sport.

The Dream Team's various victims certainly weren't offended by the lopsided manner in which they were summarily dispatched.

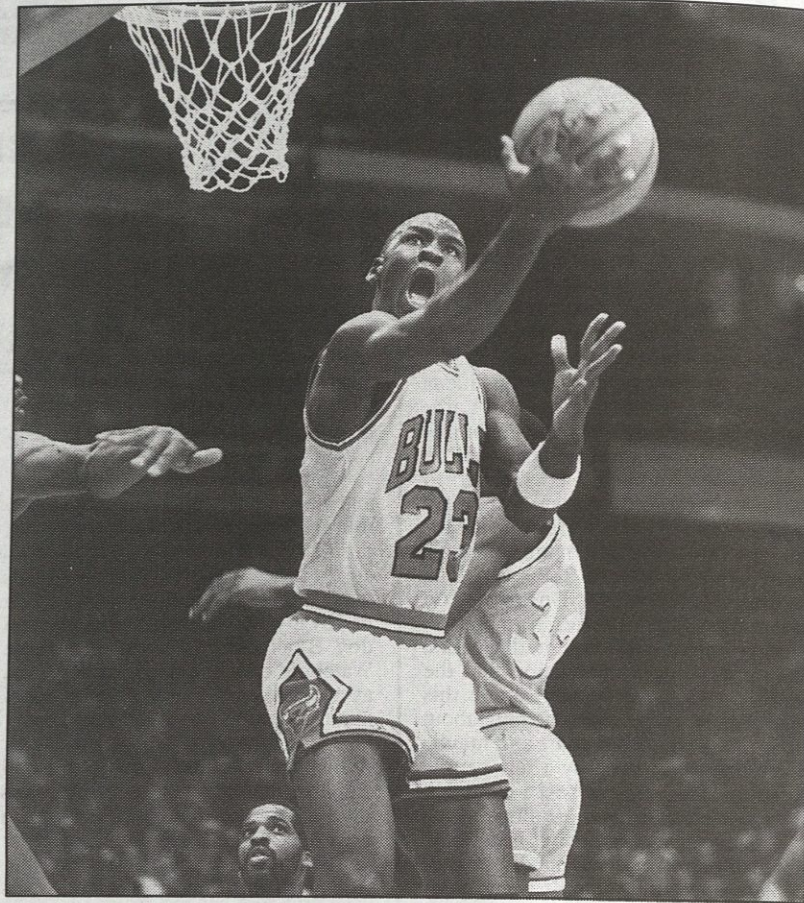
Quite to the contrary.

Most were pleased to be on the same court with the players they freely admitted were their heroes, the players after whom they have attempted to pattern their own games. Impromptu photo sessions and post-game autograph signings were routine. The post-game group photo of the U.S. and Lithuania was truly something special, especially when one considers that many of the Lithuanians were members of the '88 Soviet team that relegated the U.S. to bronze medal status.

Brazil's Oscar Schmidt, one of the premier international players for years, had five shots blocked in a 44-point loss to the U.S. Yet, it was Schmidt who insisted the U.S. should routinely send their best to the Olympics, the World Cup and the Pan-Am Games.

How popular is basketball? The preponderance of European professional leagues, the number of foreign players performing at colleges throughout the U.S., the packed houses at the Olympic venue and the Barcelona kids decked out in NBA apparel provide an obvious answer.

Then there's the matter of striving to improve by playing the best competition available. Every American kid, from youth sports on up, is



Getting the chance to perform against players like Michael Jordan can only increase the competitive level in Europe.

brought up on the notion that you only get better by playing against athletes better than yourself. Why should we expect athletes from other countries to be any different?

Here's a parallel for you. The U.S. soccer program has made dramatic gains by seeking out top international opponents. Is it of World Cup championship caliber yet? Of course not. But it has gained increasing respect world-wide.

Which is exactly why the rest of

the world so welcomed the chance to play The Dream Team. Not a single athlete was foolish enough to believe they would win. But they had a chance to see precisely how they stacked up.

Much work needs to be done. But the rest of the world is catching up because it studies and emulates its idols — the players in the NBA.

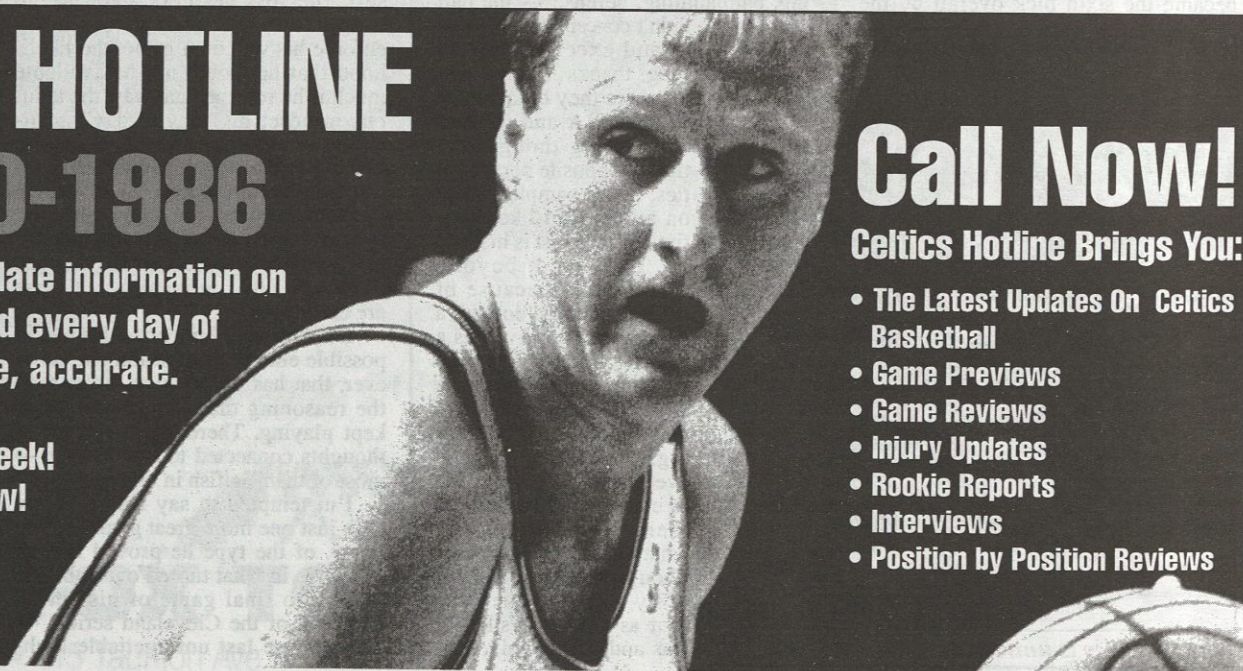
Don't be surprised when gold is mined by Croatia or Lithuania some time in the not too distant future. ●

CELTICS HOTLINE
1-900-860-1986

The most complete up to date information on Celtics Basketball, updated every day of the season. Quick, concise, accurate.

24 Hours A Day, 7 Days A Week!
When You Need To Know Now!

Current Call Charges:
\$2.00 For the first minute
\$1.00 For each succeeding minute



Call Now!

Celtics Hotline Brings You:

- The Latest Updates On Celtics Basketball
- Game Previews
- Game Reviews
- Injury Updates
- Rookie Reports
- Interviews
- Position by Position Reviews

A Little House Cleaning

The Garden Floor Gets a Face-Lift

By Bob Schron

Amid the talk of a new Boston Garden, and the hopes that the Garden will be in operation in Boston in a few years, action was taken this summer to bring a renewed sparkle to the parquet.

The almost ancient Garden floor, constructed for the Garden in the years immediately after World War II, has received a thorough resurfacing. The history of the floor in the Garden, and how closely fans nationally and internationally identify the Celtics with this floor, is significant.

The floor was originally constructed from wartime scraps of wood and was obtained from the Lynn Shipyard, the East Boston Lumber Company, in time for the 1946 season. Originally, the Boston Celtics played their home games at the Boston Arena; during the team's first season in Boston, the home games were shifted to the Boston Garden and, in 1952, the parquet floor was transferred.

The cost of the original floor was \$11,000, and the decision that moved the Celtics to the Garden was the result of both the inadequacy of the Arena, as well as the team's first owner Walter Brown's intent on capitalizing on the popularity of some of his New England draftees from the 1946-47 NCAA champions, Holy Cross. Brown hired the Crusaders' winning coach, the very disciplined Doggie Julian. With two of the champions' players now Celtics — George Karftan and Dermie O'Connell — the Celtics on the parquet drew the C's largest home crowd of the season with over 10,000 in the Garden.

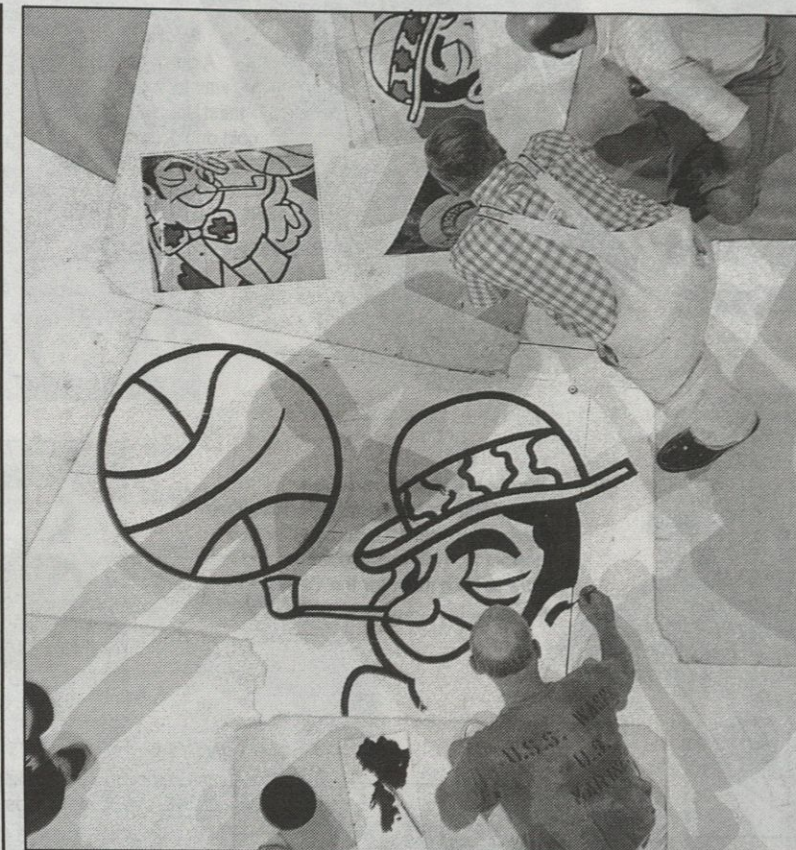
Though normal, routine maintenance has always been performed on the floor, this is the first time the parquet has received a thorough sanding and refinishing in almost thirty years.

An immediate result has been the attraction the old Garden has been to summer tourists in Boston this year. Even last week, as Larry Bird was announcing his retirement, tours were being conducted that allowed visitors to see, first, the Garden itself and, then, a segment of the tour which had visitors walking across the parquet to see the banners of the retired Celtics' numbers, as well as the team's sixteen championship banners. A final part has the tour walking through the corridors where both the Celtics' and the Boston Bruins' locker rooms are situated, adjacent to the Garden itself.

The process of re-doing the floor involved several stages. The floor was completely sanded down and months, years and even decades of wear were lifted off of the surface. Then layers of finishing and varnish were applied to the floor, resulting in a look that caused long-time observers of the floor to be positively awed. Finally, a base coat of clear sealer was put down to fill the grain of the oak.

According to a spokesperson for the crew which worked on the project this summer, "there was a real determination to refurbish the floor, to bring it up to a level where people can not only appreciate the history of what has gone on on the floor, but the floor itself."

"We've worked on the floor for years, and everyone knows about the famous 'dead spots.' If there's a certain humor about it, well, we want it



The process of re-doing the floor involved several stages.

always to be in good faith. We needed to get the floor back in shape. Otherwise that good humor would quickly turn to complaints."

It's anticipated that the Celtics could

conceivably be in the new Garden by at least 1996. The infrastructure of the floor would obviously be state-of-the-art. It is projected that there is every intention of transplanting the parquet floor to the new Garden.

In recent seasons, maintenance when there have been unforeseen problems has been more difficult. There was a major power failure during the Bruins' Stanley Cup Final three years ago. In December of 1990, the Celtics were forced to postpone their contest with the Atlanta Hawks in the middle of the second quarter, and as a result of a sudden heat wave in this winter month, pushing the temperatures in to the 70's, a wave of condensation made the floor treacherous, forcing referee Dick Bavetta to cancel the remainder of the game.

"The parquet floor is something we're very proud of, something we want to maintain at its very highest level. That's why this summer's work was necessary and had a lot of meaning for us. If these are to be the final years in the old Boston Garden, then we want to place the best possible face on it. And it can begin in no better place than with the Celtics' parquet floor," added the spokesperson.

The project was the culmination of the joint efforts of Garden Shop Steward Paul Dembicki, Garden Chairman and President Larry Moulter and Celtics' General Manager Jan Volk. The project required two weeks to complete. Reportedly, the most demanding tasks were painting clearly the white lines surrounding the court and the painting anew of the leprechaun at center court. ●

CELTICS BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

Complete your collection of CELTICS PRIDE

Only \$4.00 per issue
Postage and Handling Included
THESE ISSUES ARE STILL IN STOCK...

ORDER NOW

VOLUME 5

- Issue 1 - Robert Parish
- Issue 2 - DJ/Holidays
- Issue 4 - Soul of the Celtics
- Issue 5 - Coaches Courageous
- Issue 6 - Reggie Lewis
- Issue 7 - All Stars
- Issue 8 - Brian Shaw
- Issue 10 - Joe Kleine
- Issue 12 - Kevin McHale
- Issue 13 - Dave Gavitt
- Issue 14 - Chris Ford

- Issue 15 - Dee Brown
- Issue 16 - Rookie Camp
- Issue 17 - Shaw & Ford
- Issue 18 - Reggie Lewis
- Issue 19 - Dee Brown

VOLUME 6

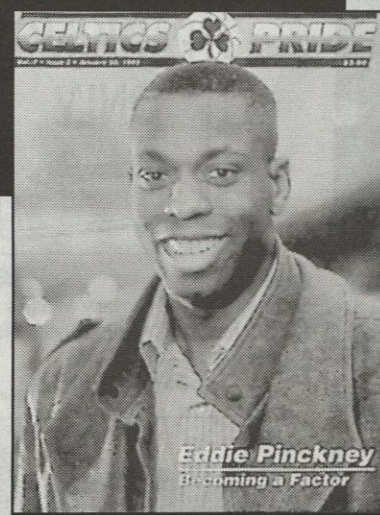
- Issue 1 - Kevin Gamble
- Issue 2 - Larry Bird
- Issue 3 - Brian Shaw
- Issue 9 - Kevin McHale
- Issue 15 - Rick Fox

- Issue 17 - Red Auerbach
- Issue 18 - Reggie Lewis
- Issue 19 - Chris Ford
- Issue 20 - Dave Gavitt

VOLUME 7

- Issue 1 - Pride and Glory
- Issue 2 - Rick Fox
- Issue 3 - Eddie Pinckney
- Issue 4 - Dee Brown
- Issue 5 - Robert Parish
- Issue 6 - Kevin Gamble

- Issue 7 - Reggie Lewis
- Issue 8 - Larry Bird
- Issue 9 - Kevin McHale
- Issue 10 - John Bagley
- Issue 11 - Chris Ford
- Issue 12 - "D"
- Issue 13 - Larry Bird
- Issue 14 - Red Auerbach
- Issue 15 - Jon Barry
- Issue 16 - Free Agents/Rookies



Eddie Pinckney
Becoming a Factor

To order, please use the order form on page 21.

CELTICS

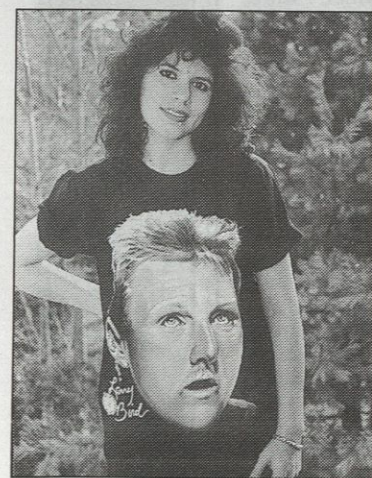
LOCKER ROOM
LOCKER ROOM
LOCKER ROOM
LOCKER ROOM
LOCKER ROOM
LOCKER ROOM



Washed Black Denim Cap
NEW! Hat for the coming season. One size adjustable strap in back for that perfect fit. This washed denim cap is sure to be a must for the Celtic fan.
#172.....\$11.95



Face to Face - Dee Brown
Bold graphic is new for this season and Dee is featured on this 100% cotton black t-shirt.
#70.....\$16.95



Face to Face
Dream Team Gold winning t-shirt in grey. 100% cotton shirt with all the caricatures on the front and the American flag on the back with all their names in blue and red.
#62.....\$16.95



Reggie Lewis Pro Stat
New for this season. 100% cotton ash grey t-shirt screened in black, green and yellow for the bold look of today.
#171.....\$14.95



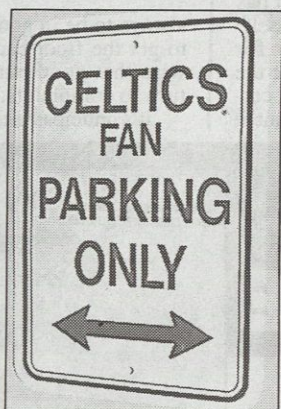
Olympic Gold
Dream Team Gold winning t-shirt in grey. 100% cotton shirt with all the caricatures on the front and the American flag on the back with all their names in blue and red.
#173.....\$15.95



Sports Bottle
A quick convenient way to satisfy that big thirst. Insulated for hot or cold drinks in a rugged 32 oz. size. Celtic green with white lettering.
#29.....\$11.95



Round Key Ring
Solid brass key ring to let you know who's LOCKER #33! in the Boston Garden.
#33.....\$6.95



Parking Sign
Show off your team loyalty with this 12"x18" heavy duty gauge styrene fan parking sign.
#4.....\$14.95



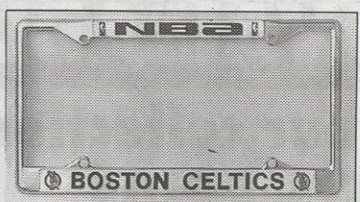
Now Aerial Assault II
Designs in every direction - on the front, in back and on the side. These contemporary team graphics were especially designed for all Celtics fans.
#67.....\$18.95



Big Three
Who else, but Bird, Parish and McHale could fit this billing. This colorful green t-shirt shows it all, the banner wins, the trophies and the BIG THREE.
#170.....\$18.95



Sports Watch
Made by Bulova. This great looking black banded watch is battery operated with a green and white face, with Boston Celtics in the center.
#2.....\$39.95



License Plate Frame
This heavy duty silver metal frame with Boston Celtics and NBA in green.
#64.....\$9.95



Cleared for Take-Off - Dee Brown
This says it all! 100% black cotton t-shirt is brightly screened for the total impact of this high flying dunk.
#65.....\$14.95



Little Sweets
Just for your favorite toddler (2t, 3t, 4t please specify). Grey sweats with green and white stripes down the leg and Celtics logo on the shirt.
#235.....\$24.95



Sky Box T-Shirt
Who else? Larry's Sky Box Card featured on a 100% heavy wt. cotton t-shirt. Actual picture of the card is on the back of this colorful shirt with all his stats
#61.....\$18.95

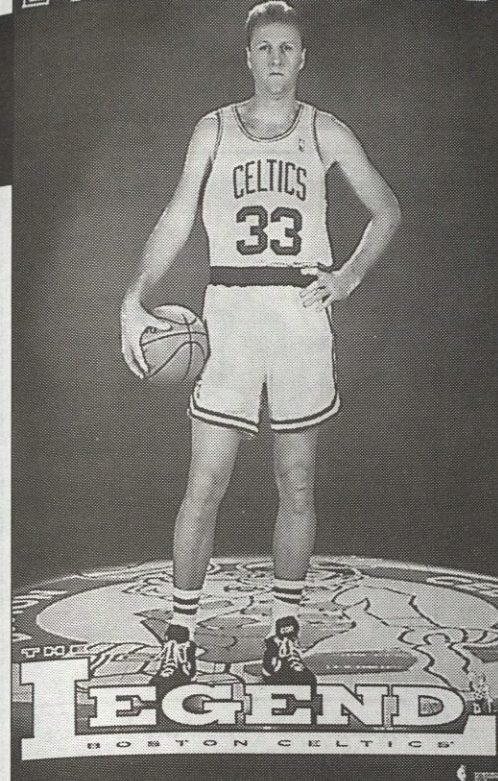


HOT TICKET Key Ring
Get your Celtic season pass here! Sold out in the Garden, but available for you in a solid brass rectangular ticket replica.
#18.....\$7.95



Watch
Made by Bulova. This watch is designed with your more dressier occasions in mind. It features a black leather band, quartz accuracy, gold tone case and face with Celtics logo in green and white in the center of the face.
#233.....\$79.95

LARRY BIRD



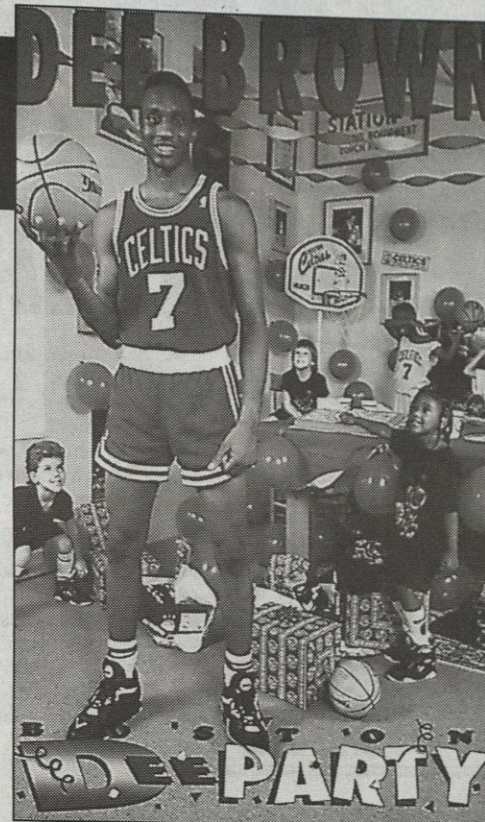
"The Legend"
New 1992 poster for Larry Bird. It says it all in this 23"x35" colorful poster.
#68.....\$9.95



Coffee Mug
It's back by popular demand. This white ceramic mug is trimmed in gold with the Celtics logo located in the center
#31.....\$11.95



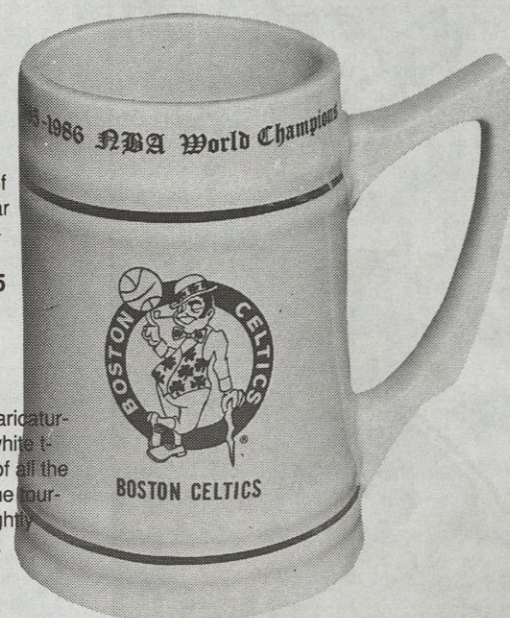
USA Basketball T-Shirt
America's Dream Team, caricatured on this 100% cotton white t-shirt. On the back is a list of all the countries that will play in the tournament with their flags brightly screened in various colors.
#66.....\$15.95



"Dee Party"
New for Dee. This colorful 23"x35" poster showcases Dee unique in personality with this Boston theme.
#69.....\$9.95



Pro-Cap-Green
New for spring. Green twill pro cap with the same great embroidered letters in white. Script trimmed in yellow. Adjustable to fit all sizes
#167.....\$11.95



Championship Tankards
Collector's items! Play-off games listed on the back of each tankards. Specify year on order. 73-74, 75-76, 80-81, 83-84, and 85-86.
#28.....\$19.95



Bird & Magic Together
Together At Last, the two powerhouse All-Stars with equally matched NBA stats, featured on the back of this black t-shirt, join forces in Barcelona for the '92 games.
#232.....\$17.95



Telephone
Your official team Phone. Now you can be one up on anyone of your Celtics friends with this NEW green and white phone. Lighted big button keypad, desk/wall convertible, hearing aid compatible and 3-year warranty. A MUST FOR ANY CELTIC FANATIC!!!
#6.....\$59.95

ORDER FORM

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State/Zip _____
Daytime Phone _____
Please make checks payable to The Celtics Locker Room
☐ Money Order ☐ Check
Visa/MasterCard No. _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____

SHIPPING & HANDLING

Shipments are sent via U.P.S. Street addresses only (No P.O. Boxes). Charges for shipping and handling are noted. All orders shipped outside the continental U.S. must go air freight. Call for rates (203) 329-2000. Allow 4 to 6 weeks.

Mail To: The Celtics Locker Room 85 Old Long Ridge Road • Stamford, CT 06903

ITEM#	Item Description	Adult Size	Quan.	Unit Cost	Total

Adult Sizes (M, L, XL) only.

If merchandise is unavailable a credit slip will be issued

Order	Add
\$ 0.00 - \$ 10	\$5.00
\$ 10.01 - \$ 30	\$6.00
\$ 30.01 - \$ 50	\$6.50
\$ 50.01 - \$ 100	\$7.00
\$ 100.01 - \$ 150	\$8.00
\$ 150.01 - \$ 200	\$9.00
OVER 200.01	\$10.00

(CT. Residents Only) Add 6% Sales Tax

Shipping (See chart at Left)

Total Amount of Order

By Bob Schron

Red Auerbach agreed with Bird's assessment that whether he (Bird) had come along or not, the NBA would have reached the level of popularity it presently enjoys: "The reason the sport of professional basketball is so popular is that the league has a built-in 'farm system,' in the NCAAs, which is also doing very, very well. Players like Shaquille O'Neal, David Robinson and Danny Manning have come into the league and either have been stars or will be. But the point is they're coming into the league with a high degree of visibility. Fans know them well already." ...Rick Fox on Bird's career: "His career was important, and it goes beyond sports; he touched millions of people's lives. He was fulfilling his mission in life, and fans realized this." ...There were whispers of criticism about the first round draft choice of Jimmy Rodgers' Minnesota Timberwolves, Christian Laettner, originating from the Dream Team practice

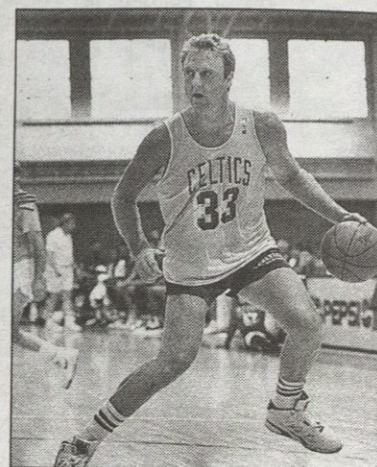
CONFIDENTIAL



MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WERE TOUCHED BY BIRD

sessions — reportedly from the Dream Teamers. Laettner had severe difficulty getting off his shots inside... Former Celtic head scout Ed Badger is back on the bench, the number one assistant to Bob Hill with the Pacers... Another former Celtic, Sam Vincent, was moved to Milwaukee as the Magic cleared out contracts in order to sign O'Neal and Stanley Roberts. Ed Laetner had a press conference one week after returning from Barce-

lona, and since it was prior to Bird's announcement, it did lead to the expectation that Bird would make the decision he did. Asked whether Bird should have considered playing a limited schedule, Laetner thought yes. "It was just too difficult for him to handle 82 games — the travel, the stress of games, the level of competition."...Laetner pointed out that the injury to Bird's back likely would have caused problems for the man later in life...Ed



Bird and the NBA grew up together.

Pinckney, now off of two solid seasons in Boston, nevertheless remains guarded about his chances to continue it: in *The Boston Globe*, Pinckney commented, "I wish I could be confident, but I'll really be expected to do certain things, something I'm looking forward to, but it's one thing to do it a couple of games or in a stretch run. This is my seventh year in the league. I'd like to put a couple of more years together, to become really established."...Pinckney had hopes and intentions of being more of an option in the offense next season and was working hard on his medium range shooting.

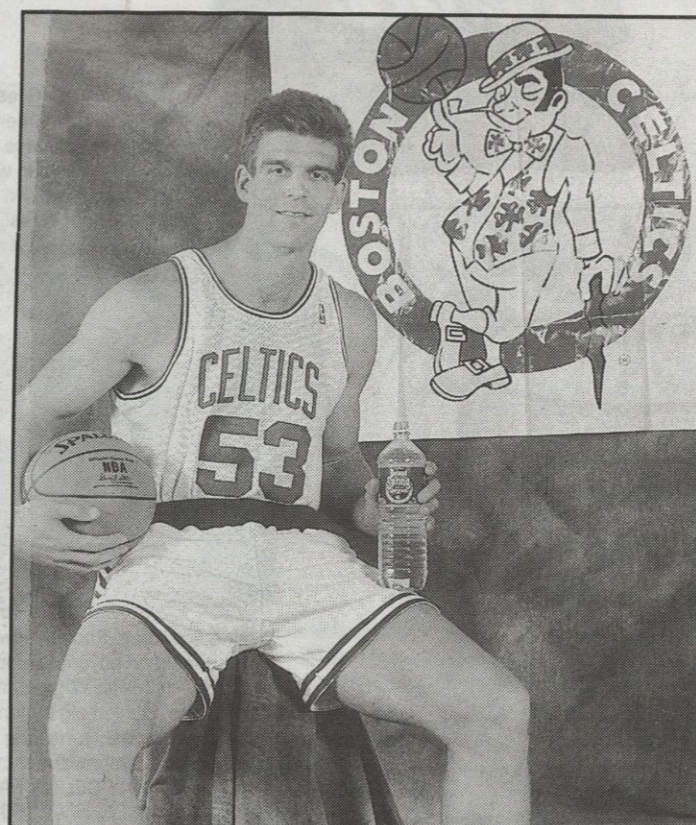
NOTES. Robert Parish held a press conference one day after Bird's retirement, assisted by agent Bob Woolf. Parish's own playing plans remain intact. He's signed through this season. Parish called Bird "the best player he's ever played with."... Kevin McHale on Bird: "I think Larry did everything a man could possibly do in basketball. I think if he had any regrets it would be that he didn't end his career on his own terms."...Dee Brown and Rick Fox were the only Celtic teammates who

"I think Larry did everything a man could possibly do in basketball. I think if he had any regrets it would be that he didn't end his career on his own terms."
— Kevin McHale

were at the Bird retirement press conference... Bird called the press conference on a Tuesday and the following day was off to Indiana to host his golf tournament back in his home state.

Dee Brown on the Celtics' prospects in the aftermath of Bird's announcement: "I think the young players, guys like Rick (Fox), Reggie Lewis, Kevin Gamble and other young players benefitted from Larry, his combination of talent and personality. We still have the (now) 'Big Two.' We'll also have to deal with the fact, for better or for worse, that we know Larry is not coming back any longer. There will be a void in the locker room. But at least we have had the experience of knowing we have won, at least we have had some success without him, finally." The Celtics won 21 of 22 in a late season run at the end of last season when Bird was rehabilitating his back. •

Joe Kleine enjoys Poland Spring at home and at courtside.



Next time you're thirsty, try Poland Spring. Like a crisp, cool spring morning in Maine, Poland Spring is clean and refreshing. That's why, since 1845, folks have been saying, "There's nothing like the taste of Poland Spring."

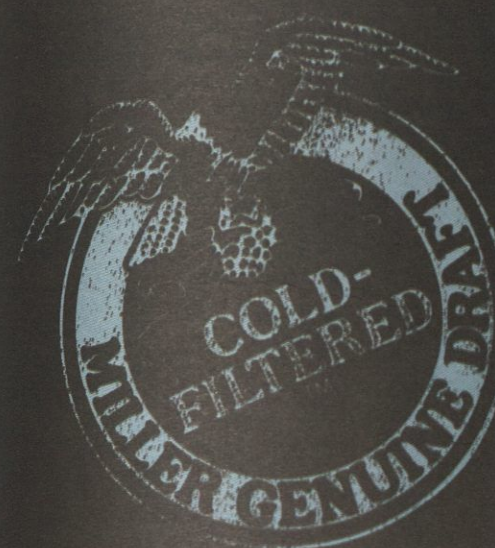
We hope you enjoy Poland Spring.

Poland Spring. What it means to be from Maine.

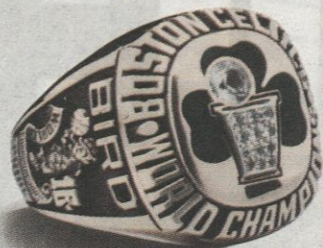


Preferred by the Boston Celtics

#1 DRAFT CHOICE OF CELTIC FANS



CELTICS' PRIDE



Kodak's PRIDE



CAPTURE ALL THE GLORY OF CELTICS BASKETBALL WITH
NEW KODACOLOR GOLD FILM... KODAK'S MOST REALISTIC
COLOR PRINT FILM EVER.



Show Your True Colors

KODACOLOR GOLD IS A TRADEMARK. © EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY, 1988.